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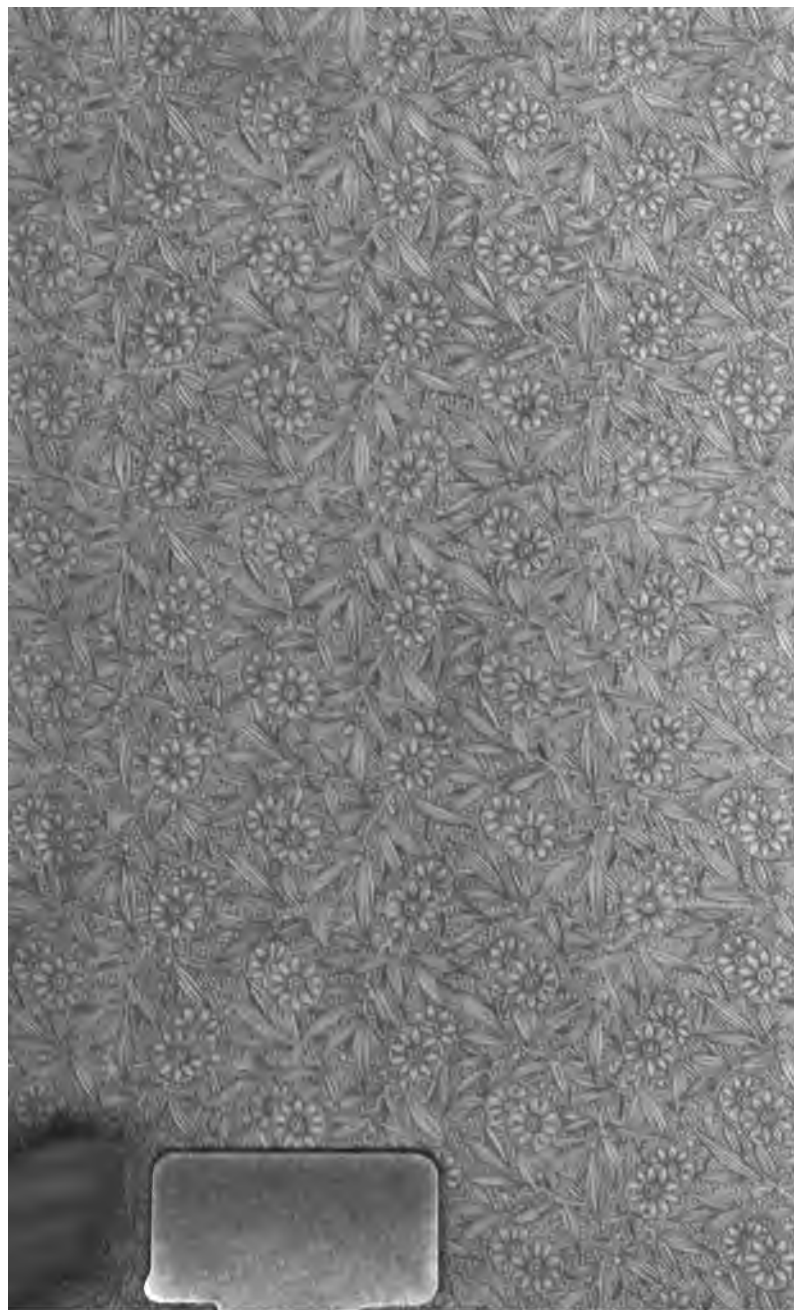


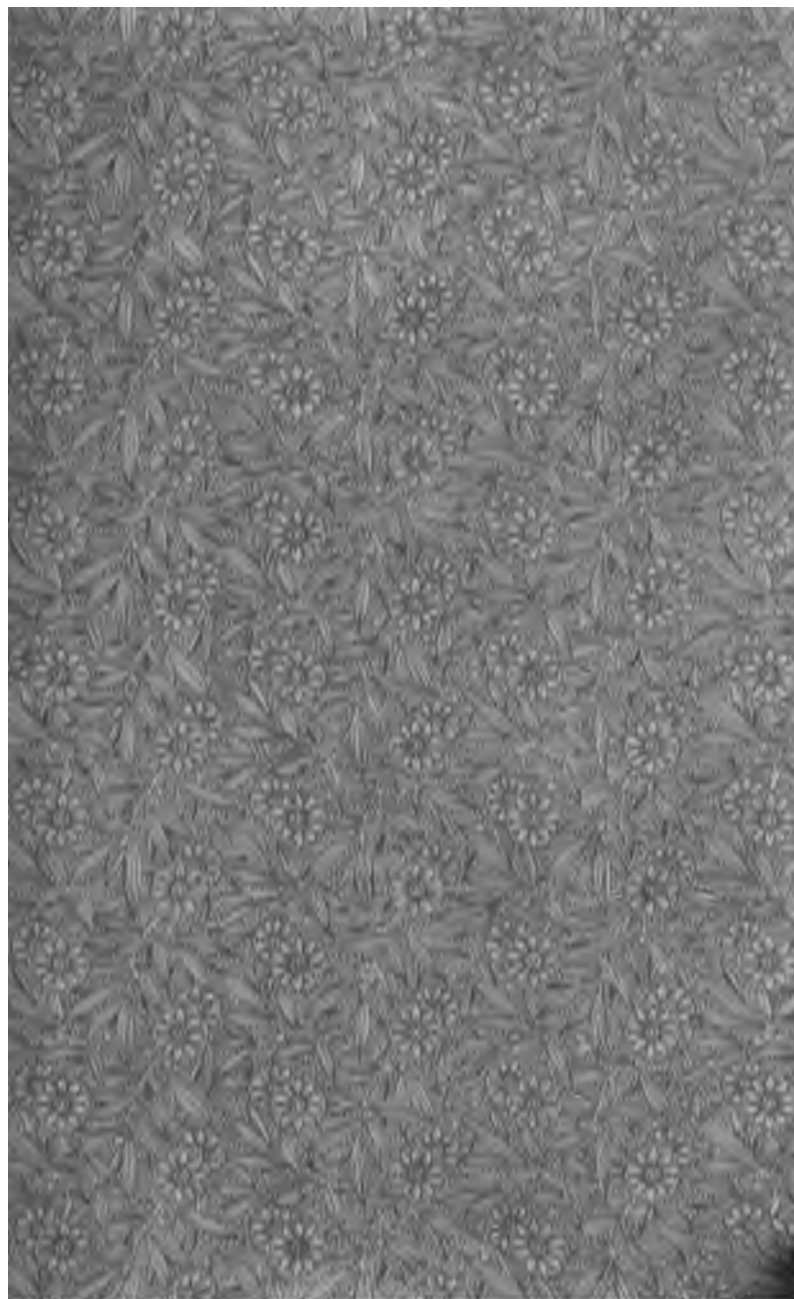
HIS DEAREST WISH



MILNER IN WARE









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HIS DEAREST WISH.

A Novel.

BY

MRS. HIBBERT WARE,

AUTHOR OF

'THE KING OF BATH,' ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

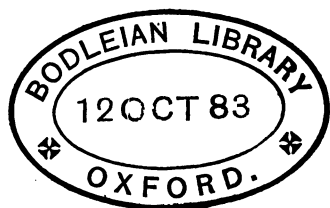
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To
WILLIAM FRANCIS AINSWORTH, ESQ.,

Ph.D., F.S.A., F.G.S. of London and Paris, etc.,

THIS NOVEL

Is Dedicated,

IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION OF THE KIND ENCOURAGEMENT
GIVEN BY HIM, IN FIRST INTRODUCING TO THE
PUBLIC, IN THE PAGES OF 'COLBURN'S NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE,'
WHEN UNDER HIS EDITORSHIP, THE LITERARY WORKS OF
MARY CLEMENTINA HIBBERT WARE.



NOTICE.



THE works made use of by the authoress of this novel are the following : John Kay's 'Portraits and Biographical Sketches' of well-known persons living in Edinburgh about the end of the last century ; 'Memorials of the Pretenders,' by Mr. Jesse ; Marshall's 'History of the Rebellion of 1745 ;' Smollett's and Cormick's 'History of England ;' the *London Magazine*, 1751 ; *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1757 ; Abbé Le Blanc's 'Letters from England,' 1746 ;

Daniel Wilson's 'Memorials of Old Edinburgh;' William Skene's 'Highlanders of Scotland;' Martin's 'Western Islands of Scotland,' etc., etc.



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HIS DEAREST WISH.



CHAPTER I.

THE OLD CAPITAL OF THE HIGHLANDS.

DARK clouds drifted rapidly across the sky, and fierce gusts of wind, rushing through the openings in the adjacent mountains, swept over the picturesque and quaint old town of Inverness, the ancient capital of the Highlands. It was the afternoon of the 16th of April, a day fatally memorable in the annals of our history, when the heath of Culloden Moor was dyed with the blood of so many brave and gallant Highland chiefs, and their not less gallant

clansmen. From early morning, hearts had beat quick and high with hopes and fears in the old northern capital, so many of whose inhabitants shared the feelings of devoted loyalty which inspired the souls of the gallant men who had determined that day to win or die for Prince Charlie. Hurrying to and fro, as soon as possible after their early dinner, along Castle Street, where, in their excitement, they jostled each other in the narrow thoroughfare, or standing in groups under the crumbling ruins of the old castle wall, the townspeople, both men and women, conversed painfully and anxiously as to what might be the possible issue of the struggle, even then being decided on the moor.

Mingled with the howling of the wind, as it rushed through the fissures in the ranges of mountains that surrounded the old town, and swept over the roof-tops of the houses, they could hear, at intervals, the roar of the distant artillery, now awfully loud and distinct, now sullen and subdued, as the gusts of wind rose and fell.

It was yet early in the afternoon, when a rumour began to spread through Inverness that the Prince had lost the day.

Rumour, styled by the Mantuan Bard the hundred-tongued monster, horrible and huge ! small at first, and fearful almost to let itself be heard, but soon gaining strength in its onward and precipitate flight, and becoming invigorated by the uncertainty of its evil tidings, screams through the air, raising its voice loudly to the heavens, terrifying men by its very vagueness. In like manner the rumour that a fatal catastrophe had befallen the gallant little Highland army at Culloden flew from lip to lip and from house to house ; uncertain and vague at first, but soon gathering woeful confirmation from first one, then another terrified fugitive rushing through the town from the blood-stained field where the sun of the Stuarts had gone down for ever.

Hurrying to the shelters of their homes, the sorrow-stricken and affrighted citizens beheld from their windows, ere many

anxious minutes had elapsed, a lamentable and a dismal spectacle—a spectacle fraught with dread and fear to them and theirs.

In Church Street there stood in those days a tavern, called simply Macdonald's Tavern, from the name of its owner.

Alexander Macdonald—or Sandy, as he was usually called—like all the Macdonalds of Moidart, to which clan he belonged, was a staunch Jacobite; and as he stood with his wife at an upper window of his house, looking down upon the street, his fine countenance was overspread with a look of the keenest anguish and distress, for not only was his heart wrung by the thought, that the cause of him whom he acknowledged as his rightful Prince was lost, but also because one infinitely dear to himself and his wife had gone out that morning to fight against the German Elector and usurper, as he styled King George, and might now for aught he knew be lying dead on the bloody field, or, if not, would be ere night-fall a hunted fugitive.

Tall of stature, with dark hair only just flecked with grey, and with his keen blue eyes undimmed, spite of his sixty years, Macdonald yet retained pre-eminence amongst his fellow-townsmen, as being the handsomest and finest man in Inverness. In addition to this, there was a native dignity and an air of refinement in his manner and bearing, which seemed to qualify him for holding a far higher position than that which he occupied; for Sandy Macdonald could boast that a streamlet of the same blood as that of his Chief flowed in his veins.

His wife, some years younger than himself, was still a comely-looking woman, but her usually bright animated face was now clouded; an air of the most poignant distress hovered about her fine features, as she tried in vain to soothe and comfort a little child, who, seated on her lap, would now gaze fearfully from the window, and then, in terror at what he saw, would utter a faint cry and nestle his tiny head against her motherly bosom. He was but a little

fellow of some four or five years old, very beautiful in feature, with dark lustrous blue eyes, and a tinge of red gold mingling with the warm chestnut hue of his wavy bright locks.

Wildly exciting and terrible became the scene in the streets beneath as the hours wore on. Scattered fugitives now increased to groups of men flying for their lives, like hunted beasts with the baying hounds close on their track, targets and arms cast away, and their tartans torn and blood-stained ; some unarmed, but nearly all wounded, and all hurrying on, never slackening the headlong flight which alone could save them.

From the broad clefts in the heaped-up masses of cloud that had obscured the sky, the sun suddenly shone forth with magic brilliancy, lighting up the narrow street with its quaint irregularly fashioned and modelled houses ; some like Macdonald's inn, built in the old Flemish style, with large courts, arched gateways, and high gables facing the street ; others low-roofed,

only half glazed, the lower half of the window being protected by a shutter ; cottages thatched with heather, and having wooden staircases before the front, lighted by small round or oval holes, not big enough for a man's head to come through.

On this afternoon, a face expressing intense fear and anxious curiosity protruded from every one of those orifices, and without meaning to treat with levity so great a calamity and misfortune, a stranger then passing through the streets of Inverness might have been excused, if he had thought that the owners of those faces looked like so many wretches with their heads in the pillory.

From the earnest and sorrowful contemplation of what was passing without, the attention of Alexander Macdonald and his wife was suddenly diverted by the abrupt entrance of a young Highlander, his bonnet lost or cast away, his plaid, of the Robertson tartan, torn and blood-stained like the rest of his apparel, his looks wild and haggard, and his whole appearance that of a

man who had just escaped from some hair-breadth and deadly peril. Staggering to the seat which Margaret Macdonald had placed for him, he strove in vain for a few moments to answer the agonized questions of the innkeeper and his wife. His breath came in quick gasps, and only an inarticulate sound issued from his parched lips. When he spoke at length, it was in a voice broken by sobs, and in disjointed sentences.

‘Oh, fatal day!—all is lost! and our Prince, our beloved Prince——’

‘What of him? is he safe? Not slain! Do not tell us that!’ exclaimed Macdonald with quivering lips, whilst his wife wrung her hands and wept.

The stranger shook his head, and again some few moments elapsed before he could speak.

‘Not slain,’ he gasped at last. ‘Sir Thomas Sheridan—the brave Irish officers—he would have charged at the head of his guards—they seized the bridle of his horse, and forced him from the field.’

‘And who are you, sir? and how did

you escape?' asked Macdonald. 'You have been sore pressed, I perceive.'

'You'll have heard Dr. Archibald Cameron speak of James Robertson of Kincaigie; he told me that I could rely on you for safety. Will you save me?'

'That I will, sir, at the peril of my life,' replied the innkeeper.

'I see many poor men flying this way, Sandy,' said Mrs. Macdonald, turning towards the window; 'the street is becoming crowded. O Lord! I hope they will escape the Elector's troops. Alack, what bloody work we shall see! Oh, luckless day!—black day for us and our Prince!'

And as Mrs. Macdonald ceased speaking, she sobbed afresh, and strained the little child to her heart with passionate energy.

'Can you tell us anything of the battle, sir?' asked Macdonald; 'for as yet we know nothing here but that the Prince has lost.'

'A part of our army retreated in tolerable order after the defeat, but the rest, who fled towards the town along the open moor, were easily overtaken by the King's

light horse,' replied Kincraigie; 'but our enemies have not gained a bloodless victory, though they were treble in number, and refreshed with sleep and a good breakfast, whilst we were worn down with fatigue and hunger.'

'Indeed, sir, we townsfolk know too well how little there has been for you to eat for the last two or three days, either here or in any of the villages about,' interposed Macdonald.

'Half-starving as we were, we faced them like men, fighting in a good cause, and a holy cause;' and as he spoke, the young Highlander's eye kindled and his cheek flushed. 'We waved our claymores and rushed upon them, and minded no more for the musket and the grape shot that swept through our ranks than an' it had been but so many hailstones. We made a clean break through the Monros, and the first line of the English, and killed one of their commanders.'

'They don't like the Highland claymore and dirk,' interposed Macdonald, with a

look of pride; 'they have not forgotten Gladsmuir and Falkirk yet.'

'Lord George Murray dashed forward at the head of us and the Mackintoshes,' continued Kincaigie. 'Oh, but he is a pretty man, so tall and robust! He never calls out "Forward! forward!" but it is always "Follow me, my lads!" Then, after breaking the first line, we rushed on the second; but when we got within a yard of them they poured such a close and deadly fire into our ranks, that nothing human could face it and live; so there the rout began, and on that fatal spot our dead lie the thickest.'

The King's troops had now entered the town, and were furiously cutting down and remorselessly slaying everyone in the streets, and the gutters soon began to run with blood. Many of the townspeople who had left their homes from mere curiosity fell victims to the indiscriminate rage and fury of these ferocious conquerors. The clash and the rattle of firearms, and the curses and shouts of the dragoons,

mingled with the cries and groans of the wounded and dying, and many a peaceful citizen lay bleeding to death on his own doorstep.

Impelled by a kind of horrid fascination, Macdonald and Kincaigie still stood at the window, whilst Mrs. Macdonald, her face covered with her apron, sat huddled on the floor, holding the terror-stricken child clasped tightly in her arms.

The bloody work was over at last, for there were no more to slay, and the streets became silent and quiet. It was now that a party of English officers alighting from their horses, threw the reins to the men who followed them, and prepared to enter the inn, a movement which Kincaigie, who had been gazing keenly at the foremost of the party, no sooner perceived than he whispered a few hurried words to Macdonald. The latter instantly seizing him by the arm, dragged him across the room and hurried him up a ladder in the corner leading to the trap-door of a loft above.



CHAPTER II.

UNWELCOME GUESTS.

JAMES ROBERTSON had barely disappeared through the trap-door leading to the loft, and closed it behind him, when Lieutenant-Colonel Powell, the foremost of a group of eight or ten English officers, clad in scarlet, booted and spurred, and wearing the black Hanoverian cockade in their cocked hats, entered the apartment, still occupied by the innkeeper and his wife. It was, in fact, the largest and the best room in the house, and therefore most fit for the accommodation of company. It is true that this best room had rather a barn-like appearance; for, like the rooms in most of the houses in Inverness of that period, it

had no other ceiling than the boards which served for the floor of the room above, and as these had become dry with age, there was a chink between each, through which it was easy for anyone in the room both to see and hear all that might pass in the one underneath him.

The other officers, following close upon their leader, strode into the room with the air of victors flushed with success.

Mrs. Macdonald would have hurried away, but Colonel Powell, in an insolent and imperious tone, bade her stay, that she might inform him what kind of fare she had to put before them.

‘Indeed, sir, we have but little food in the house,’ she replied; ‘and that little is scarce eatable for such gentlemen as ye are,’ she added, with something of irony lurking in her tone. ‘We have only a small quantity of meat left in the cellar, which is salted, and a scanty supply of goat’s milk and cheese, but it hath not a good flavour, and we can find you a few oatmeal bannocks.’

‘Sdeath ! we are likely to have scurvy fare after all our hard work,’ exclaimed Lieutenant-Colonel Whiteley, a fat and red-faced officer. ‘Zounds ! the chase after these cursed rebels makes one both hungry and thirsty. There hath been ’—and here the speaker burst into a brutal laugh at his own sorry jest—‘ a rare knapping of noddles this afternoon. I suppose, my good woman, the mock Prince and his ragged, ravenous crew of rebels have devoured everything far and near like a swarm of locusts, and the King’s officers must be content with their leavings.’

‘The Prince’s soldiers must eat like other folks ; but it is very little that they could get in these parts,’ observed Mrs. Macdonald quietly.

‘Sdeath, woman ! we don’t want your opinions. Be sharp and get us all you have of the garbage you speak of !’ roared Colonel Whiteley, in a loud rough tone. ‘ And do you, sirrah, bring us some claret ; and demme, let it be good, or we’ll know the reason why !’ he added, turning to Macdonald.

‘We have nothing but whisky in the house, sir,’ replied Macdonald, in a calm, measured tone; ‘and as for claret, there is not a drop, either good or bad, to be got within twenty miles of Inverness.’

‘Well, my man, get us whatever you have,’ said Colonel Powell to Macdonald; ‘and demme, be sharp about it! What a noise that brat makes! Take the squalling little imp away!’ he added savagely, turning to Mrs. Macdonald; for little Charlie was very frightened, and crying violently for his daddy. ‘Is the brat yours?’ inquired the Colonel, shaking his fist at the child.

Mrs. Macdonald faltered for a moment, and then replied, ‘He is my grandson.’

‘Ho! ho! then your son is one of the rebels, I dare swear. Oons! the little cub had better go to Culloden Moor to find his daddy if he wants him,’ said Colonel Whiteley, with a brutal laugh, as Mrs. Macdonald quitted the room with the child. Her husband, who was commanded with a volley of oaths to go and bring the whisky, followed them.

‘Zounds! that tavern-keeper gives himself as many airs as though he were a gentleman,’ said Lieutenant Fairfield, a young officer in Cobham’s dragoons.

‘When did you ever hear of a Highland tavern-keeper being other than a gentleman?’ remarked Colonel Whiteley sarcastically.

‘Demme, sir,’ interposed Colonel Powell, ‘I know something of the Highlands; I have been quartered there before now. These fellows all tell you that they are first cousins, or at least second cousins, to the laird. ‘Sdeath, sir, you must not call their hovels taverns; that is too ungentee!; they style them *changes*.’

Here all the officers burst into a loud guffaw, in the midst of which Macdonald entered, bearing a large stone bottle containing a good supply of whisky, and having taken some glasses from a cupboard and placed them before his guests, he stationed himself at the further end of the room, as though with the intention of waiting on them, but in reality to keep an

eye on the ladder leading to the loft above, on which, every now and then, he cast a furtive and anxious glance.

‘Do you know, sir, what a trick has been played on Captain Todd?’ asked the Honourable Captain Wharton, a gay aristocratic young officer, with bright laughing blue eyes, and his hair nicely tucked up and well powdered, addressing Colonel Powell, and then glancing mischievously at the Captain. ‘By my honour, you were outwitted, Todd; you must admit that.’

‘Surely no one can have got the better of you, Todd,’ said Colonel Powell with a sneer, as he turned towards that officer, who, report said, had often got the better of the gallant Colonel at cards. ‘Demme, sir, you haven’t let one of these rascally Highlanders cheat you,’ he added, laying an ironical emphasis on the last two words.

‘’Twas really a Highlander,’ interposed Captain Wharton, laughing.

‘Only a prisoner who contrived to slip

through my fingers,' replied Todd carelessly.

'Sdeath! so then the hangman has been cheated,' exclaimed Colonel Powell with a sneer. 'Pray, Captain Todd, was the fellow a chief?' asked the Colonel drily, 'for that would have been a worse piece of luck than you usually have; by my soul it would.'

'The fellow was not a chief,' replied Captain Todd, rather nettled; 'but Captain Wharton chooses to make a great deal out of a small matter.'

'I was vastly amused at it,' replied Wharton, laughing.

'Demme, sir, I saw that very plainly,' said Todd, glancing sharply at Captain Wharton, 'and by my soul, if I am not vastly mistaken, it seemed to me that you were by no means sorry when this cur escaped.'

'I admire your discernment,' replied Captain Wharton, in a tone of quiet irony, twisting his blond moustache as he spoke. 'I am sorry for your ill-luck, Todd, but

you must admit that the Highlander was a pretty young fellow, and, egad ! I am glad he made his escape. We have had enough bloody work for one day. Faugh !' he added, with an air of disgust, 'my heart sickens at the thought of it. 'Twas more fit for butchers than English officers and gentlemen.'

'Oons, sir, those are not very loyal sentiments for anyone who holds his Majesty's commission,' growled Colonel Powell.

Captain Wharton being the son of a peer of considerable influence with the Ministry, was wont to express his sentiments very candidly, even to officers of higher rank than himself, if they were not his own commanding officers, so he very composedly replied :

'Pardon me, Colonel Powell, but permit me to observe that we of Lord Ancram's light horse are as loyal to King George as you gentlemen of Hamilton's dragoons ; and,' he added, as he looked significantly round the company, 'I think you cannot

boast of having served His Majesty better.'

Colonel Powell, who very well understood this covert allusion to the cowardly behaviour of Hamilton's and Gardiner's dragoons at Gladsmuir and Falkirk, bit his lips, and turning to Captain Todd, asked :

'How came you to lose your prisoner, Todd? zounds, sir, I am amazed that you should have been outwitted.'

'That is soon told,' replied Captain Todd. 'I had ridden up to the fellow, and was going to cut him down, when he called out, "Hold your hand; I am for the King!" now, demme, I know nothing about their tartans, so how could I tell whether he belonged to our loyal clans or was a rebel?'

'How could you?' interposed Colonel Powell, with assumed sympathy. 'Well, pray go on, Todd.'

The captain, thus encouraged, proceeded.

'I then said to the rascal, "Where's your bonnet?" for I knew that if he was

one of our Highlanders, he would have the red or yellow cross stitched on it.'

'Egad! Todd, you have always got your wits about you,' said Colonel Powell, with an air of affected admiration.

'But I hadn't in this case,' replied Todd, tartly, 'for when the rascal told me that somebody had snatched his bonnet off his head in the fight, I was fool enough to believe him.'

'Oh, ho, I see! You were not, after all, as sharp as usual. The scamp must have meant the Pretender's father when he said, "I am for the King," and doubtless he threw away his bonnet when he saw you coming, lest you should see the white cockade.'

'Devilish good! Capital!' exclaimed several officers in a breath.

When the general laughter had subsided a little, Colonel Powell cried out:


'How did the knave give you the slip, Todd?'

'That is the cream of the story, and you shall have it from me, just as I had it

from Todd himself,' interposed Captain Wharton ; ' for,' he continued, looking with a benignant smile at that officer, ' I wish to save our friend the mortification of telling how his generous confidence has been misplaced, and how villainously he was betrayed.'

'Sdeath, sir, I am happy to see that you have been so mightily amused,' exclaimed Todd, with an ironical smile ; ' but pray proceed, Captain Wharton. I shall not interrupt you, sir. Pray go on ; you will doubtless amuse Colonel Powell as well.'

' Well, sir,' began Captain Wharton, with a merry twinkle in his eye, ' our friend Todd most kindly told the slippery young Highlander that he must follow him, and he was so compassionately considerate—so humanely considerate—as to add that he would have him taken care of, as he was slightly wounded. But who can be always on his guard against deceit and ingratitude ? The dog followed, and then on the first opportunity that offered itself, when our gallant friend's attention was drawn to



another affair of duty a little way off, zounds! if the wily Highlander did not slip off and leave him in the lurch.'

'Blood and thunder! gentlemen, I wish that their mock Prince had engaged us with all his clans, our victory would then have been more complete, but'—and here the speaker indulged in a loud guffaw—'we should have caused some loss to the hempen trade, for we should have saved the trouble of much hanging.' Thus spoke Cornet Smith, a beardless young officer of Cobham's Dragoons, who, becoming very much elated under the influence of whisky, did not hesitate to change the subject of conversation, in order that his own voice, as well as those of his elders, might be heard. 'Demme, gentlemen,' continued the loquacious Cornet, striking the table with his fist, 'the Edinburgh people and some others too in Scotland tried to persuade our men that the Highlanders, with their broad swords and targets, were invincible and more than a match for troops not armed like them; but, demme, gentlemen, we

soon showed them the superiority of the English musket and bayonet.'

The speaker had uttered his verbose and boastful opinion in loud and insolent tones, casting, as he spoke, an almost contemptuous glance at Captain Wharton, who returning it with one of supreme scorn, and with flashing eyes, was about to reply to Cornet Smith, when an elderly officer, who until then had sat silent, suddenly addressed the latter in a tone of some rebuke, which his rank entitled him to assume.

'It is fortunate, young gentleman,' said Major Wolf, 'that all the clans did not engage, or many of us might not have been sitting here just now. As old a soldier as I am, I assure you, I felt something like awe as I saw the Highlanders, led by Lord George Murray, pull their bonnets firmly over their eyebrows when they rushed upon our lines and received our fire. The rage which glowed on every face and gleamed in every eye was terrific and more than natural. By my soul! it was an

expression of terrible passion never to be forgotten. They fell with all their fury on Burrell's regiment and the Monros. Our men, poor fellows ! would have suffered more severely than they have done if my regiment had not been ordered up to their aid. I say again, 'tis well all the clans did not charge.'

When Major Wolf finished speaking, there was a general silence for a few moments, and even the half-tipsy Cornet Smith, who was about to give utterance to some flippant remark, had discretion enough to restrain himself.

'Pray, Major Wolf,' then inquired Colonel Powell, 'do you know why the Macdonalds refused to fight ?'

'I do not know for certain, but I have heard that the clans had taken umbrage because they were not placed in the post of honour on the right wing. It was certainly very strange conduct on their part, and unfortunate for the Pretender. But,' continued the Major, 'whatever their reason for not fighting may have been, they

cannot be charged with cowardice, for they stood steady in their ranks, stubbornly and unflinchingly receiving our murderous fire ; and when the battle was over, they retreated from the field in tolerable order with their pipes playing.'

'Sdeath,' interposed Cornet Smith with a vacant laugh, 'they remind me of the Greek lesson we used to translate at school, about the cockles hissing whilst they were getting roasted. Oh, you wretches, do you sing whilst your houses are burning !'

No one, however, seemed to appreciate the Cornet's attempt at wit, and Captain Todd, addressing Major Wolf, said :

'Poor Lord Robert Kerr ! Do you know who else in Burrell's regiment we have lost ?'

'I am sorry to say,' replied Major Wolf, 'that Burrells lost some good officers. The rebels, sword in hand, made a complete breach in the first line, and it was there that poor Lord Robert fell, and Colonel Rich, Captain Romers, and Lieutenant Ed-

monson were badly hurt. Lord George Murray,' continued Major Wolf, 'the Athol men, and the Robertsons, Stewarts, and the Cameronians, and the best of the clans did their utmost to break the old Tangerines, but they were repulsed and paid dear for their attempt, for there was not a bayonet in the regiment that was not either bent, or stained with their blood. They say that Lord George Murray was badly wounded.'

'Then if we have lost some good officers,' cried out Colonel Whiteley, 'tis a satisfaction that many of their chiefs must have been killed, if one may judge from the number of our soldiers who are strolling about in the laced waistcoats and hats they have taken from their bodies. But, 'sdeath! the rebel rascals are so poor that there was very little booty for our brave fellows.'

'Except broadswords and muskets,' interposed Captain Todd, 'for which I understand that his Royal Highness has promised to pay at the rate of one shilling

for every broadsword, and half a crown for every musket.'

'Poor booty for the fellows after such hard work,' remarked Colonel Whiteley.

'I have been told that the greatest villain in the rebel army has been slain,' exclaimed Captain Todd with a tremendous imprecation.

'Who do you mean?' inquired Major Wolf, with a look of surprise.

'Sdeath! who else should I mean but that arch-rebel Lochiel?' replied Captain Todd with another oath.

'I believe that that report is untrue,' said Major Wolf quietly; 'a great number of the rebel chiefs have certainly been slain, but Lochiel's body has not been found among them. Ah, well,' continued the Major, 'though I think he took a bad side, he was a gallant gentleman, and so were all the Highland chieftains. They fought most desperately, and everybody who saw them as they lay dead upon the field allowed that men of larger size, larger

limbs, and better proportions could not be found.'

'Sdeath! Wolf, the rebels have found an admirer in you,' exclaimed Colonel Powell, with a sneering laugh.

'I admire brave men; whether friends or foes,' replied Major Wolf drily.

'I am proud that the opinions I hold are supported by you, Major Wolf,' said Captain Wharton, bowing to that gentleman.

'Yesterday was his Royal Highness's birthday,' cried out Colonel Whiteley, as he held aloft a tumbler of whisky punch, 'which we have so gloriously kept to-day! Sdeath, if Lord George Murray and Lord Lewis Gordon had a mind to make a bonfire in honour of it yesterday by setting Fort Augustus in a blaze, we have spilt enough of their Highland blood to-day to put out the flames.'

'I suppose,' inquired Lieutenant Fairfield, 'that nothing certain is known about the Pretender?'

'Nothing,' replied Colonel Powell, 'ex-

cept that he is reported to have ridden to Beaufort Castle, the seat of that wily old rebel Lord Lovat.'

'Aye,' remarked Colonel Whiteley, 'and I hear that his Royal Highness has already sent Brigadier Mordaunt with five hundred men to burn down the Castle and ravage all the Frazer country, and bring in here all the cattle and provisions they can lay hands on; so, thank Heaven, gentlemen, we shall soon have something better to eat than stale salt meat and rancid goat's-milk cheese.'

'Ah,' broke in Colonel Powell abruptly with a sententious air, while his utterance was becoming thick from his frequent potations. 'Ah, my friends, what a safeguard for our pure religion, our liberties, and our property have we in that brave Prince, his Royal Highness the Duke! Was it not a grand sight when he rode through our lines, after the battle was over, to see him thank us all in his Majesty's name, and then to hear the soldiers huzza and shout "Flanders! Flanders! We will follow your

Royal Highness against any enemy"? And then,' continued the Colonel with tipsy reverential gravity, 'you should have heard what his Royal Highness had to say when he looked upon the field of battle—upon all our fallen comrades. After the fatigue of the day was over, he retired to a house hard by to refresh himself, but he sat only for a few minutes, and then took a serious ride to view the multitudes that lay dead on the ground. He was followed by some of his suite, who observed him to be in deep meditation and then to lay his hand on his breast, and with his eyes raised up to heaven he was heard to say—"*Lord, what am I that I should be spared, when so many brave men lie dead on this spot?*" Such an expression of deep humility and compassion,' continued Colonel Powell, looking more tipsy as he attempted to look pious, 'towards his fellow-creatures, is truly worthy of a Christian hero.'

'May I ask if you heard this yourself?' inquired Major Wolf, with a curl of the lip.

Colonel Powell hesitated a moment, and then said that a young German officer, an aide-de-camp of the Duke, was his authority.

‘Indeed!’ replied Major Wolf very drily. ‘Then all I have to say is, that those fine sentiments of humanity and compassion felt by his Royal Highness must have speedily evaporated, for I recognised nothing of that sort when he came up to the spot where the battle had raged the hottest, that is, where Burrell’s regiment was attacked, and where I happened, just then, to be looking to some of our own wounded, amongst whom lay numbers of Highland officers, dying and dead. Well, gentlemen, close at my feet lay a young Highland chief badly hurt, and, as the Duke approached, the wounded man raised himself partially on his elbow. “*To whom do you belong?*” inquired his Royal Highness. “*To the Prince,*” was the prompt reply of the Highland officer. On hearing this answer, what do you think his Royal Highness—the Christian hero,

as Colonel Powell calls him—dared to ask me to do? dared, I repeat,’ exclaimed the Major, boiling over with rage, as he looked round the company, who continued silently gazing at the speaker. ‘Would you believe it, gentlemen, when I tell you that his Royal Highness, the Christian hero, turned to me, an English officer and a gentleman, and said, “*Major Wolf, shoot that insolent scoundrel*”?’

An indignant ‘Shame’ was heard to burst from the lips of Captain Wharton and some others of the officers, whilst Major Wolf paused for a minute looking round the table.

‘Sdeath, gentlemen,’ he resumed, ‘I was so astounded that I could not speak at first, but gazed at him, almost doubting whether my ears had not deceived me. I had seen him encouraging the common soldiers most barbarously to murder the wounded rebels in cold blood, but I never could have believed that a prince of the blood would have presumed so to insult an officer and a gentleman. By my honour,

I believe that these Germans are only half civilised.'

'By Jove, 'twas a droll request to make to an English officer,' said the half-drunken Colonel Powell. 'What did you do?'

'What did I do?' repeated Major Wolf, drawing himself up and speaking in a tone of deep bitterness and scorn. 'Zounds, sir, I did what I expect every other English officer would have done under the like circumstances. 'Sdeath, sir, my honour is in my own keeping, and I quickly told the Duke that my commission was at his disposal, but that I could not consent to become an executioner.'

A murmur of half-suppressed applause greeted Major Wolf's last words, which caused Colonel Whiteley to cast a furious glance at the innkeeper, bidding him, at the same time, beware how he ventured to interfere in their conversation.

'I never spoke, sir,' replied Macdonald.

'Somebody did,' observed Captain Todd.

'I'll swear I heard him.'

'Perhaps 'twas the devil,' said Colonel

Whiteley with a hoarse laugh. 'I say, my man,' he added, abruptly addressing Macdonald, 'where does that ladder lead to?'

The innkeeper started involuntarily, but replied with tolerable composure that it led to a small loft.


'A loft, eh! Demme, what have you got up there?'

'Nothing, sir, beyond some old lumber.'

'Blood and thunder, that's a lie, I'll warrant,' replied Colonel Whiteley, bringing down his fist on the table with a crash. 'Demme, I'll lay my life that we shall find a good store of provisions in that same loft, whilst this knavish tavern-keeper sets his Majesty's officers down to such swinish fare as this. Look at the knave. Zounds! his very manner betrays him.'

And in truth poor Macdonald seeing how the life of Kincraigie now hung, as it were, on a thread, was unable to hide his terror and agitation.

'I'll go up and see for myself,' shouted Colonel Whiteley, rushing from the table, and walking towards the ladder, the first



steps of which he began to ascend rather unsteadily, whilst several of the other officers, who had also left the table, were prepared to mount after him.

Macdonald followed Colonel Whiteley's movements with a look of despair. That corpulent gentleman had already reached the top of the ladder, and was laughing and shouting, whilst he began to push open the trap-door over his head, when an unlooked-for accident turned the thoughts of all present from the loft to a very different subject.



CHAPTER III.

THE POOR BROTHER.

A GRATING crack, and a dull thud, followed immediately by loud and angry exclamations—‘Hell and fury!’ ‘Blood and wounds!’ and a volley of similar expletives, suddenly struck upon the ears of the innkeeper as he stood motionless, waiting in breathless and painful anxiety for the result of Colonel Whiteley’s entrance into the loft. Though naturally humane and benevolent, it must be owned that Sandy Macdonald felt intense relief, and even a secret satisfaction, when the step of the ladder on which the corpulent Colonel was standing suddenly broke under his weight, and he was precipitated headlong beneath.

Colonel Powell and Captain Todd, who were standing under the ladder, and with whom the heavy body of Whiteley came violently in contact, as he fell, were both knocked down.

All was uproar and confusion, cursing and swearing for a few moments. Colonel Whiteley lay groaning on the floor. Colonel Powell was partially stunned, and Captain Todd had received a severe cut across the bridge of his nose.

Two or three bare-footed servants, on hearing the crash and noise, had hurried into the room, and proffered assistance to the sufferers.

Colonel Powell soon staggered to his feet seeming little worse for the accident, but Whiteley could not rise from the ground, where he shouted in accents of mingled rage and pain, 'Blood and wounds! will no one help me? My leg is broken, I tell you. You villain,' he gasped, shaking his fist at Sandy Macdonald, 'you did this; you enticed me to get up your cursed ladder. I'll have you

hanged at your own doorpost. You shall swing for this.'

'Oh, come, Whiteley, you are going too far. Zounds you are,' said Colonel Powell, who seemed to feel no amount of sympathy for his brother-in-arms. 'The rascal could never have expected a man of eighteen stone to mount his ladder.'

'I believe that one of my ribs is broken as well,' groaned the victim. 'Zounds, 'tis a nice time to jest at my expense, but I'll have every Highland rebel in the house hung for it.'


'Shall I run for a doctor?' asked Macdonald, who, though he sincerely and naturally rejoiced at Kincaigie's escape, felt some sympathy for the pain Colonel Whiteley was suffering from his broken leg.

'Yes, do, and be sharp about it,' said Major Wolf, 'and let your wife show us to a bedroom where our friend can remain comfortably till he gets well again.'

Macdonald at once did Major Wolf's bidding. A doctor was brought, and the


suffering Colonel, who lay on the ground, alternately groaning and cursing, was borne by his brother officers to a quiet room in the rear of the house, and there left to the care of the surgeon, whilst his friends retired to rest, to sleep off the effects of the whisky, and recover from the fatigue of their bloody day's work in slaughtering the flying Highlanders. When all was still in the inn, Kincraigie stealthily descended from the loft, and under cover of the night, sped quickly away to the mountains, where hundreds of fugitives from the field of slaughter had already found secure shelter. But years of privation, hardship, and peril were destined to pass over his head ere he should find himself again in safety, which will be the case when we shall next meet with him.

The next day dawned fair and beautiful, a true spring morning, the air warm and balmy, and the sun shining with brightness and radiance, and causing to look more white the snow-white tents of the English



infantry, who had been encamped, since the night before, outside Inverness, whilst inside, all appeared to be life and bustle ; the dragoons and horsemen, who had been quartered on almost every household, shouting as they led their horses through the streets to the river, in order to water them, and the French officers, or we might rather call them Irish, for though in the French king's service, they mostly bore Irish names, who had surrendered to the Duke of Cumberland, as prisoners of war, after the battle, and given their parole not to quit the town without leave, loitering listlessly about the thoroughfares.

All nature seemed to smile ; the mountain burn, sparkling in the sunbeams, leapt with a joyous sound over the pebbles and stones in its narrow bed ; and the birds, springing from bough to bough of birch and beech and fir, where soft young leaves were just beginning to bud, strained their throats, as though to welcome the advent of sweet springtide. Tufts of early primrose, which had suddenly burst into bloom



in sheltered nooks, mingled with the brown and sombre heather; whilst wood and water, green hill side, and mountain peak, yet shrouded in snow, all seemed endued with fresh beauty, as the sun, rising higher in the cloudless sky, gilded the landscape with a still more dazzling radiance.

In strange and mournful contrast with the rare loveliness of this landscape was the sight that presented itself to the eyes of two men, who had just crossed the handsome stone bridge which spans the broad waters of the Ness. The red tide of war had flowed from Culloden Moor even to the very walls of Inverness, and here and there, on the main road to the Moor, still lay the corpses of many of the Prince's unfortunate adherents, stiff and stark, with pale, rigid faces turned upwards to the clear blue sky, some wrapped, as it were, in peaceful slumber, others with bodies hacked and mutilated, their clenched hands and distorted features showing how hard and in what mortal agony they had died. With distracted and anxious looks,

the two men of whom we have just spoken wandered up and down the road, carefully examining each side, and every bush or piece of furze, as though in search of some one or something, till at length, one of them exclaimed :

‘ Brother, it is useless searching further here ; I feel persuaded that the poor wee bairn has wandered away to Culloden Moor, thinking to find his father. Poor bairn ! poor little wee bairn ! ’ added the speaker, in a tone of the deepest anguish ; ‘ ’tis like enough he has now no father.’

‘ Well, let us go quickly to the Moor, then,’ replied the man addressed as Brother, but we must pause to give some slight description of this person, premising, however, that his companion was the innkeeper, Sandy Macdonald.

The Brother was well known to Macdonald, the latter having often seen him in his native place, the island of Benbecula. This island, about two miles south of North Uist, belonged to Ranald Macdonald, and all its inhabitants were

Catholics. Formerly there had been in it several small chapels and a nunnery, which had stood on the site of the more modern Nun's Town. But the Reformation had swept away from the island nearly every outward vestige of the old faith, one memory of the past alone seeming to remain, in the person of the Brother, an old lay Capuchin, who often sojourned in Benbecula, and who was called by the inhabitants *The Poor Brother*. Poor, indeed, he was, having nothing to live upon but what was given to him. He passed about from the island to the mainland, ministering as far as he could, in his capacity of a lay brother, to the spiritual comfort of the Catholic Highlanders, but his chief occupation was that of conducting to the homes of Catholics any priest who might occasionally visit those remote parts, for the purpose of saying mass and administering the sacraments, and in assisting the priest on these occasions, as a clerk or acolyte. For such services, the Poor Brother held himself fully satisfied with

food and raiment. Indeed, he lived in as great simplicity as any monk of his order, his diet being very mean, and his drink only the water of a lake or rivulet, while in his habit he was no less mortified, than if he had lived in his cloister. True, he wore no gown such as those of his order wear, nor would it have been safe for him so to distinguish himself, even in the isles or in the Highlands, but in lieu of it, he had on a short coat, which reached down no further than his middle, with narrow sleeves, a plaid above it, fastened on his breast with a wooden pin, leaving his neck bare, and which was girt about his middle with a strap of leather, instead of the hempen cord of his order, and reached to his knee. His feet were bare, and he wore an old battered hat, with a fisherman's line of horsehair wound round it, for the Poor Brother would sometimes angle for a trout, if he felt inclined to enjoy a feast any day. His ordinary bed was a litter of straw or heather in some out-house.

Trouble had seemed to thicken on the



heads of the worthy innkeeper and his wife. They saw the cause of their beloved Prince lost, their town in the hands of Cumberland's ruthless soldiery, and their home, in common with many others of their fellow-citizens, invaded and occupied, and their goods consumed and wasted, and in addition to all this, not only were they tormented by agonising suspense as to the fate of little Charlie's father, but since morning, the boy himself had been missing, and a thousand fears as to his safety filled the minds of Macdonald and his wife. The child had slipped out unawares, and Mrs. Macdonald, flying hither and thither in attendance on her unwelcome guests, had not at first perceived his absence.

Imagining that the little boy had gone into some neighbour's house, the innkeeper went out to inquire up and down the street, but being unable to gain any reassuring tidings, he became anxious and uneasy, and soon an alarming fear suggested itself to his troubled mind—'The poor wee bairn, he has been continually

calling for his daddy—perchance with some vague idea of finding him the child has gone in search of him.'

Meeting with the Poor Brother, Macdonald had enlisted his ever-ready sympathy and help, and the two men both concurring in opinion that possibly little Charlie might have turned his baby steps to the dreadful Moor, the scene of such cruel carnage and slaughter, they set off together at a brisk pace, mindful, however, to keep a sharp look-out on either side of the road for the object of their search.

On they plodded along the sandy highway till they had left the town far behind them, the sunlight, on the one hand, gilding the waters of the bays and creeks of the Moray Frith, and on the other, streaming in full radiance upon the long smooth ridge, on the summit of which the fatal battle had been fought.

More numerous and terrible became the signs of the previous day's strife as the Poor Brother and Macdonald neared the Moor. The dead bodies now lay here and


there in groups, instead of singly, and the fresh green sward and the patches of brown heather were trampled down and sodden with blood, or torn up by the roots by some wounded wretch in an agony of pain.

But the field of Culloden itself—few can picture to themselves the horror which a field of battle presents. There were sights and sounds enough to appal the stoutest heart. Groans and sighs, from different sides, assailed the ears of the Poor Brother and Macdonald; for although the greater number of the wounded Highlanders had been murdered by parties of the victors, who traversed the field after the action, stabbing some with their bayonets, and cutting down others with their swords—a frightful tragedy, sanctioned by the Duke of Cumberland himself, still many poor wretches were, with an unheard-of barbarity, allowed to remain on the field, mingled with the dead, enduring all the agonies of bodily pain and intolerable thirst. Every form of suffering was even

yet to be seen : some could neither move from the spot where they lay nor yet lie still, sometimes they would try to rise and immediately fall down again, and as if to forewarn the dying men of the fate that awaited them, in case their bodies should be left unburied, the hoarse melancholy caw of flocks of carrion crows, hovering about in the distance, struck upon their ears.

Again and again, as the voice of some poor man, tortured by the anguish of his wounds, and beseeching a drop of water for the love of heaven, reached the ears of the Poor Brother and his companion, they would pause to soothe his death agony, or run to the nearest brook and fill a hat or a bonnet with the water he so frantically implored.

A few of the townspeople of Inverness, braving every danger from the straggling troops of Cumberland, had ventured to go to the Moor in search of relatives and friends, whom they might perhaps succour, if alive, or to whom, at least, if dead,




they might render the last mournful services.

Threading their way with looks of horror and anguish, the Poor Brother and Macdonald came to that fatal spot where the Prince's gallant Highlanders had made their most desperate and deadly charge. Here it might be seen with what courage and bravery they had fought; each man lay struck down with honourable wounds in front, and covering with his body the spot of ground he stood upon when alive. This was the spot where Burrell's regiment had been charged. The English dead and wounded had been cared for, but the Prince's faithful followers still lay there, their placid or their agonized features showing what manner of death they had died, whether by gunshot wounds or by the bayonet. And here too, on the vacant spaces between the bodies, lay broken bayonets and bent bayonets, broken swords, Highland targets and short bloody dirks, and occasionally an iron stocked Highland pistol, half concealed by the heather, for

immediately after the battle, Cumberland's soldiers had carried away all the fire-arms and claymores. Other relics of the deadly strife met the gaze of the Poor Brother and his companion, bagpipes and fifes and broken drums, all mixed together, knapsacks and cartridge boxes, three-cornered hats, with the black Hanoverian cockade in them, and high sugar-loaf-shaped grenadier caps of the English soldiers, together with Highland bonnets.

Stepping as carefully as they could over corpses and blood-stained relics, the two companions pursued their search, when suddenly the attention of the Poor Brother was attracted by a cry from Macdonald, who was a few yards in advance, a cry expressive of the most intense grief. Even as he uttered it, he flung himself down upon the blood-stained heath beside the body of a young man, clad in the garb of a Highland officer. With streaming eyes and pallid face, Macdonald bent down over the corpse, straining his ears as though hoping to catch some faint pulsation of the



heart—alas! still for ever—and pressing the cold lifeless hands in his own in the fond expectation of a return of vital warmth.

‘Dead! dead!’ cried Macdonald in a tone of despair. ‘Oh, Brother,’ he added, ‘how shall I tell her this? My poor wife? She bore him in her arms and suckled him at her breast.’


‘Poor Margaret,’ sighed the Brother, ‘this will indeed be ill news for her, but we must lose no time in idle sorrow. My friend, we must continue our search for the child, for I am sure he must be somewhere hereabouts, and so soon as we have found him we will settle together how we may give Christian burial to these poor remains.’

With a look of still more intense sorrow than his face had yet worn, Macdonald silently obeyed the Brother’s admonition. However, the search was now soon ended, for at no great distance from the spot where his sire lay, wrapped in his bloody plaid, as if in a shroud, they found the now

orphan and hapless child. Worn and weary with that walk of five miles, the sturdy little legs had failed at last, and terror and grief too had probably filled his baby heart to bursting, for his cheeks were wet with tears as he lay calmly sleeping on the verge of the battle field, the blood-stained heather for his pillow, and grim death surrounding him on every side.

Tenderly and almost reverently did Sandy Macdonald raise the child in his arms, the action failing to disturb his deep and tranquil slumber.

‘Alas! poor wee bairnie,’ he exclaimed, with eyes streaming with tears, ‘what a sad fate is thine! left fatherless and motherless, and destitute on the face of the earth; thy home, ’tis like enough, already razed to the ground and burnt, and thy kinsmen slaughtered. Alack, alack, poor bairn!’ he repeated again, in accents of bitterest woe; ‘thou hast none left to care for thee now, save Sandy Macdonald and his wife; but with God’s help,’ he added, reverently, raising his blue bonnet



from his head as he spoke, 'we will strive to make up to thee, to the best of our abilities, for the parents thou hast lost.'

'Take the poor child back to Inverness, my friend,' said the Brother, gently urging Macdonald on, 'and I will wait here till nightfall, when you may, with less fear of interruption, remove the remains.'



CHAPTER IV.

REQUIESCAT IN PACE.

THE hour of midnight had struck, and though a few lights still twinkled, here and there, in some stray casement, Inverness was now still and quiet enough, after the turmoil of the day.

Under cover of the darkness, a cart carrying apparently a small load of heather, and followed by some three or four men, had drawn up near Macdonald's house, and quickly and silently, a form, shrouded with a plaid, was taken from under the slight covering of heather, and with simple and loving reverence, the men bore their burden to a chamber, in a wing at the back of the inn. This room was over a



place seldom used, except for storing away turf and empty barrels. It was entered by a door on the first landing, was uncieled and open to the roof, and looked dismal enough, for the oaken beams and rafters, blackened by age, supporting the tiles, were all exposed to view. To judge by appearances, one would have said that the room was simply a repository for the lumber and broken furniture of the last two or three generations; but it was, in truth, the chapel, whenever a priest visited those parts, and Macdonald's house being a tavern, Catholics were able to assemble there without exciting much suspicion.

When the unwelcome guests, at present domiciled under Macdonald's roof, had first surveyed the house, to see what accommodation it would afford, Sandy with great foresight had urged them to make use of this room, expatiating upon its size and the quiet of its situation, and offering to put up beds in it, but the officers, cursing it as dismal and damp, one and all refused

to occupy it, and immediately afterwards praised their own discernment, when their host, with a well-affected air of discomfiture, introduced them to a far better and more cheerful chamber, in another part of the inn. Cautious Sandy now felt assured that he need fear no intrusion into this apartment, should it ever need to be used as a chapel for any purpose of his own.

And so it came to pass that the body of the young Highland officer was carried there. Borne into the humble chapel, where he had worshipped in the early days of his young and happy life, for he too, like the Poor Brother and the Macdonalds, husband and wife, belonged to the old faith, he now lay still and cold and motionless on his hastily arranged bier, just over the very spot, where he had once knelt as a boy and served at mass, on those rare occasions when a priest had been able to visit Inverness. On no lofty catafalque, before no grand high altar draped in black, reposed the corpse of the young Highlander, for the rudely constructed

bier was composed of planks supported by three chairs. The little altar, before which the bier was placed, was poor, simple, and rude; but being held in great veneration by the Catholics who worshipped at it, it was always concealed in a large oaken case, under a secret trap-door, in a corner of the room, and only brought forth by the officiating priest himself, when he might happen to come. And in the same place there were also hidden a few sacerdotal vestments, and a silver chalice and paten.

In lieu of the usual black pall, marked with a large white cross, Margaret Macdonald's loving hands had thrown his Highland plaid over the body of her beloved child, which swept the ground in graceful folds, and veiled the rough nakedness of the bier.


Lighted tapers burned dimly at the head and feet of the corpse, but their light was strong enough to illuminate the strikingly beautiful features of the dead man.

As is often the case, when death has

resulted from a gunshot wound, the face wore an expression of calm and happy repose. The fine straight nose, the short upper lip, and the broad open forehead seemed as if chiselled out of marble, but so tranquil was the expression of the countenance, that the sleep of death might have been mistaken for natural slumber, save for the dull stony stare of the dark blue eyes, once full of fire and expression.

The same loving hands that had wrapped the lifeless form in his Highland plaid had smoothed back the rich auburn hair, tinged with red gold, and had severed, as a last token of the beloved one, two or three of those clustering curls, one of which the fond woman wore ever after next her heart.

Soon after the midnight hour had struck, the white-haired old priest, who had only that day arrived in Inverness, approached the altar, vested in chasuble and stole, and attended by the Poor Brother, commenced saying mass for the repose of the soul of the deceased. Strikingly impressive was



the whole scene, the solemnity of the hour and the occasion, the whispered voice of the priest and his attendant, who dared not speak in a louder key, lest any murmur of voices should reach perchance the ears of the English officers, the suppressed sobs of the women, and the stifled groans of the men, and above all the marble-like features of the dead Highland officer, looking so ghostlike and ethereal in the shadowy space of the large and lofty room, feebly lit up by the pale light of the tapers.


The mass being over, the old priest, whilst his little congregation were each earnestly engaged in prayer for the departed soul, proceeded to give the absolution required by the Roman ritual, sprinkling the body with holy water, and intoning, at the same time, in a low voice, the usual antiphons:—‘*Si iniquitates observaveris Domine,*’ and ‘*De profundis clamavi ad te Domine.*’

Subduing their emotion, men and women alike joined in the ceremony in solemn silence, and no sound now broke on the

ear, save the priest's voice, as he occasionally repeated, in a somewhat louder key, the words of the prayers or psalms he was reciting, or turning to those present and exclaiming '*Oremus*,' invited them to join him in prayer. The office now drew towards its close, and in clearer though still in subdued tones, the old priest uttered the words '*a porta inferi*,' to which the Poor Brother replied, '*Erue Domine animam ejus*,' and then to the old priest's petition, '*Requiescat in pace*,' a low and fervent '*Amen*' was uttered by those present.

All was over now, and before a gleam of light had tinged the eastern sky, the gallant and ill-fated, but faithful adherent of Charles Edward, had been laid in the lowly grave, hastily dug in the darkness of night, under the drooping boughs of a silver birch, in a corner of the burial place of the High Church.

Calmly he sleeps under the green sod, whilst Cumberland's brutal soldiery lay waste the country of his clan; and here let us bid him farewell, and repeat '*Requiescat*



in pace,' whilst in future pages we will trace the fortunes of the little child, whom we last saw sleeping on the blood-stained field of Culloden.



CHAPTER V.

A DIGRESSION OR NOT, AS THE READER MAY
THINK.

FIVE years have elapsed since the battle of Culloden, and the subsequent romantic wanderings, amidst dangers and hair-breadth escapes, of Charles Edward, which he effected only with the aid of the generous and devoted Highlanders, who scorned to betray their Prince, though the splendid reward of £30,000, put upon his head by the Hanoverian Government, would have placed the informer in a state of affluence and wealth.

He left them behind, but the tears and prayers and best wishes of those who had fought so loyally and so bravely for him,



who had so unselfishly risked their lives and fortunes in the cause, and loved him, perhaps, the more enthusiastically, on account of the sufferings they had endured for him, followed him to the shores of France.

He went from Scotland, but the remembrance of bonnie Prince Charlie did not depart with him, and long did his name remain enshrined in the hearts of the faithful Highlanders. But if their tears followed their exiled Prince, his flowed abundantly and bitterly as the details of the unparalleled barbarities of the victors were related to him : the illegal massacres and slaughter committed in cold blood, the havoc and bloodshed perpetrated alike in the castle of the chieftain and the cabin of the peasant—a ruthless policy of retributive vengeance, so effectually carried out, that within a compass of fifty miles neither house, cottage, man, nor beast was to be seen—all was silence and desolation.

A matter of surprise it must ever be that the hearts of the people of England

did not sicken at the horrors to which the faithful and gallant Highlanders had been subjected, horrors of which it is impossible to think without execrating their author and instigator, who was unquestionably the Duke of Cumberland, whose conduct at this time earned for him later the unenviable sobriquet of 'The Butcher.' But the truth was, that the people were blinded, they were transported with sudden and unexpected joy, when at last they received news of victory, to which they had hitherto been unaccustomed, and extolled the Duke as a deliverer and a hero, ignorant of, or overlooking the fact that he had only been victorious over an army greatly inferior to his own in numbers, and weakened by hunger and fatigue.

If, however, the hero of Culloden, that memorable monster, was mercilessly vindictive, pity and compassion might have found some place in the heart of his father, King George the Second.

Seated on the throne of England, he possessed the prerogative of mercy, yet no

record exists of his having ever volunteered to save one single wretch from axe or the rope ; of his ever having sympathised with the tears of the widows and orphans he had made, or the numbers of gallant gentlemen condemned to poverty and exile in foreign lands ; or of his having ever evinced the slightest feeling of admiration for that all-devoted and all-sacrificing love of the faithful clansmen to a royal and exiled race ; yet, to obtain such love and devotion, in lieu of the lukewarm attachment and unromantic policy which maintained the house of Hanover on the throne of England, he would have given the brightest jewel in his crown. Vindictive, like his bloodthirsty son, King George may have thought to prevent future rebellion by making a terrible example of his unfortunate subjects who had been in arms against his house—a worldly-wise policy perhaps, yet it must not be forgotten that he was an alien and a German.

Nevertheless, when people began to reflect more dispassionately on the frightful

effusion of blood, they naturally began to view the conduct of the Duke of Cumberland in its proper light; and although, in the first extravagance of their joy, they had idolised him as a hero, and had showered upon him honours and rewards for his unlooked-for victory, he nevertheless afterwards found it expedient to sue out an act of indemnity from Parliament, for the atrocities of which he was notoriously known to have been guilty. But it was not long before he afforded the nation occasion to pass judgment on his military abilities, and that no favourable one: they ought certainly to have asked themselves how the heavy unintellectual German features of the bloated man, styled William Duke of Cumberland, could have led them to expect in him abilities, military or other.

As soon as the Jacobite insurrection had been suppressed, it was decided by the English Government to prosecute with renewed vigour the war then being carried on against the French. Enormous sums were granted by Parliament for the sup-

port of the King's allies and his Hanoverian troops. No less than five German princes were subsidised to carry on a war, in which England had no more than a secondary concern. The Duke of Cumberland again proceeded to the Netherlands to assume the command of the armies of England and her allies. On this occasion, however, the hero of Culloden was opposed by a skilful general, commanding a well-appointed army, nearly equal to his own in numbers, and the consequence was that the people of England were destined to see all their fond hopes and expectations frustrated, for the vast armies paid by them never hazarded a battle without being beaten, and Cumberland had the mortification to behold one fortress reduced after another, until the whole country was subdued by the French. At the battle of Lafeldt or Val, he was completely outmanœuvred by Marshal Saxe, and as it was generally said, narrowly escaped being made prisoner, as his army fled to Maestricht.

Smarting under the disgrace of these continual defeats, irritated at the King's never-ceasing visits to Hanover, and jealous of his undisguised preference of that petty electorate to his kingdom of England, the people began to complain bitterly and loudly of the heavy burden of taxation, which they knew had been imposed upon them chiefly for the defence of that foreign possession, and to clamour against the Prime Minister, for governing by corruption, and although Jacobite opposition had now, for some time, lain gasping at the foot of power in England, discontent began to show some signs of life in different parts of the country, while in Scotland the disaffected party did not hesitate to express their joy openly and loudly that the French had given Cumberland another 'Fontenoy,' at Val, and in the hope that this latter defeat would be productive of still greater humiliation to the Hanoverian dynasty, they gave vent to their satisfaction in song :

‘Up, and rin awa’, Willie,
Up, and rin awa’, Willie,
Culloden’s laurels you have lost,
Your puff’d-up looks and a’, Willie.
This check of conscience for your sins,
It stings you to the saul, Willie ;
And breaks your measures, this campaign,
As much as Lowendahl, Willie.

* * * * *

‘In just reward for their misdeeds,
Your butchers gat a fa’, Willie ;
And a’ that liv’d ran aff wi’ speed
To Maestricht’s strang wa’, Willie.
Up, and rin awa’, etc.
To Hanover, I pray, begone.

* * * * *

‘It’s best to bide awa’, Willie,
For our brave Prince will soon be back,
Your loggerhead to claw, Willie.’

At length, however, all the belligerents became weary of the war, and none more so than the English. But badly as the generals of the Allies had fought, the Ministers of England negotiated worse during the progress of the treaties for peace at Aix-la-Chapelle. They seemed not to have paid the least regard to the honour and advantage of their country ; and thus it was, the only fruits to Great Britain of

a long and desperate war were a dreadful expenditure of blood and treasure, disgrace upon disgrace, and an additional load of grievous taxes and impositions.

Having now given a rough sketch of the state of the country during the past five years, we will resume our story in the following chapter, at a time when the kingdom had enjoyed a brief respite from wars abroad, and began to taste the blessings of internal peace, at least, if not of contentment and happiness.



CHAPTER VI.

THE WITHAMS OF BIRKSWICK.

THE Withams of Birkswick had been settled near Kirby Stephen from time immemorial, and though their estate was not large, they had always held a good position in Westmoreland, as belonging to one of the old aristocratic families in the county.

In the year 1751, the head of the Withams was a lad of some ten or twelve years old, a merry, sharp-eyed, intelligent little urchin, who gave promise, should he grow to manhood, of being just such another jovial, large-hearted man as his sire, whose death, at a comparatively early age, had caused universal regret amongst

all those to whom he was known. The deceased squire, Tony Witham, was the soul of mirth and good-humour, ever cheery and full of life and spirit, but at the same time brimming over with sympathy and kindness towards those who might be in distress, either of mind or body.

As we have said, his estate was not large ; it had been larger in past times, but the Withams had ever clung to the old faith, and so it happened that fines and sequestrations had severed many broad acres from the manor of Birkswick. Thus it was held by his friends to be a good stroke of luck when, during a chance visit to London, the young country squire won the heart of pretty Mary Sisson, the only child and heiress of Mr. Leonard Sisson, a wealthy London merchant. Mr. Sisson being a younger son of a country squire, had gone to London, when a mere youth, to try to make his fortune, an attempt which he achieved with great success. The Sissons and the Withams had for years, long gone by, been on most friendly terms,

for not only did their respective estates at Kirby Stephen join each other, but if they differed in religion, their political opinions, at least, were identical. The Withams, as we have said, were Catholics, and consequently firm friends of the exiled House of Stuart; the Sissons, though Protestants, were quite as firmly attached to the fallen Royal family. But in the Church of England of that day, there were not only High Church and Low Church parties, but there was also a third sect, who did not, like the other two, favour the principles of the Revolution: this was the sect of the Nonjurors. Secretly acknowledging the authority of the Stuarts, this last sect not only omitted all mention of the names of the Hanoverian family in their public prayers, but doggedly refused to take the prescribed oaths in favour of the new Government; hence they were styled Nonjurors. Like the Catholics, they suffered, though not so severely, from fines and penalties, and this might cause them to sympathise with each other, for the

Sissons were members of the Nonjuring sect.

Tony Witham had been very happy in his marriage, but still in all earthly felicity there must be an alloy, and though Mrs. Witham was a most loving wife, and an amiable, kind-hearted little lady, she had some predilections which did not altogether assimilate with those of her husband. He, good easy man, loved the retirement of his estate and rural sports, whilst she preferred the hurry and diversion of a town life, and found more pleasure in discussing dress and fashion, than in looking to her garden or taking an airing in her carriage.

Mr. Witham had, at the time when we open this chapter, been dead about a year, and very shortly after his decease his widow had removed to a house at Appleby, belonging to her late husband, and had taken along with her the family, a son and three little girls; her reasons for thus deserting the old manor house, we shall give a little later, in her own words.

Now Mrs. Witham had a visitor staying

with her for a few days, a Mr. Roger Hog, of Newliston, near Edinburgh, who had spent many years in London as a merchant, but had now returned to his native land, where he had bought an estate, and had finally settled there. Mr. Roger Hog had been an old friend of Mrs. Witham's father, and was, moreover, the trustee of her marriage settlement. Before quitting the house of his hospitable hostess at Appleby, Mr. Hog, who, in his early youth, had been brought up on his father's farm, and had now become much interested in agricultural matters, expressed a wish to visit Birkswick; so thither he rode on a fine June morning, attended by young Master Tony Witham, mounted on a little shaggy pony, as skittish and full of tricks as his small master; indeed, the pair were well matched, and were known everywhere, for Tony was quite a hardy and experienced horseman, and many a mile of country would he and his loved Gipsy scour over.

Mr. Hog, now, as we have just ob-

served, an enthusiastic agriculturist, had gone to Birkswick especially to inspect the land, the farm buildings, the live stock, the gardens, and, in short, everything that was to be seen ; and now, having pretty well completed his survey, he stands with Mrs. Witham's steward in front of the old manor house, the home of the Withams for many a generation.

There was nothing very picturesque in the house itself, for it was simply a long and somewhat low mansion, built of grey limestone, slated with Yorkshire flags, and having long rows of diamond-paned casements, lying back in deep recesses ; but the waxen leaves of the ivy that had climbed up to the roof, twining even about the quaintly clustered chimney stacks, contrasted pleasantly with the cold, grey tints of the stone ; and the rugged-looking pillars of the large porch, over the front doorway, were nearly hidden by a luxuriant growth of creeping plants, the dark blue flowers of the periwinkle, mingling with the fragrant blossoms of the pink honey-

suckle. In the distance some fine wood was to be seen, but the absence of trees of any growth in the gardens, which were very extensive, gave the place a bare and naked appearance. Some incongruities, too, were to be seen in this large rambling garden, for, in accordance with modern taste, there were a vast number of yew trees cut into shapes, some of them as fantastical as they were ugly, while on the other hand, as though in defiance of fashion, gooseberry and currant bushes, and herbs for kitchen use, mingled with the flowers in the stiff and primly cut beds bordering the long, formal paths. The garden was, in fact, a hotch-potch, and a compromise, for though in compliance with his wife's wishes, Squire Witham had consented to the felling of sundry beeches and birches, and the disfigurement of yews and hollies by their being cut into barbarous shapes, he would by no means give up his fruit bushes, so there they flourished, a sad eyesore to the lady of the manor house. And thus it was with many other

things ; she was, for instance, allowed by her indulgent lord to introduce some hideous statuary of heathen gods and goddesses amongst the yews, but had to submit, in return, to the continued existence of an old sun-dial, within sight of her morning parlour, and a range of beehives on a long wooden stand within a few yards in front of it.

Leaning with his elbow on the moss-grown sun-dial, Mr. Hog gazed scrutinisingly about him, whilst young Tony Witham rolled on the greensward, in play with a large sheep-dog, and the steward, John Lamb, listened with an alternating countenance to Mr. Hog's remarks, according as the Scotch gentleman's observations seemed to reflect upon his management of the property or to commend it.

The steward was a fine, tall, honest-looking Westmoreland man, possessing a feature characteristic of many of the natives of the county—a very high-bridged nose, and he had all the manly independence, shrewdness, and hospitality

of the yeomanry and peasantry of the northern parts of England.

As the two men stood conversing together, the contrast between them showed very strikingly, both as regards address, figure, and attire. Mr. Hog spoke in a sententious manner, always prefacing his assertions with the words, *I say*, while John Lamb said but little, and though he listened respectfully to that gentleman's opinions, the quiet smile on his face might seem to indicate that he did not altogether coincide with them. Then in person, Mr. Hog was middle-aged, inclined to corpulency, and had a sleek oily complexion; Lamb, on the other hand, was in the prime of manhood, tall, wiry, and active. The attire of the Scotch gentleman was careless, and it might even be said, in some parts of it, shabby. He was dressed in a very old-fashioned grey frock coat, trimmed with black silk lace, so old-fashioned, indeed, as to indicate how remarkably chary he had been of it, breeches of the same colour and grey

ribbed stockings and top boots covered his legs, and an old shabby bob wig and an equally shabby three-cornered hat bedecked his head: the steward, on the other hand, was neat and careful in his dress, in fact, a rural beau; he had on a brown cloth coat with short skirts, a figured cotton waistcoat, bright yellow leather breeches and leather spatterdashes, while on his head was jauntily set a broad-brimmed hat, from under which flowed his dark brown hair in ringlets over his shoulders.

John Lamb, who, spite of a little self-conceit, was a sensible fellow, and devoted to the interests of the family he served, and on whose estate he had been born and bred, was not above taking a hint, especially where the good of his mistress was concerned.

‘I say, Mr. Lamb, you’ve so little wood about here! I vow I never saw a country with less. I’ve seen, ’tis true, since I have been in these parts, that the soil is generally barren, and that there is a deal

of uncultivated waste land up and down, but I say, I have come across some fruitful and pleasant spots, and Birkswick looks to me to be one of 'em. You have some good oak and birches and firs down to the left there on the lawn, but, I say, how is it you have none nearer home ?

Lamb scratched his head and hesitated ; he had himself grieved over the forest trees, which, to please Mrs. Witham, had been so ruthlessly felled, and he scarce liked to own the truth to this fault-finding visitor. Suddenly struck with a way, as he thought, of getting out of his difficulty, he said with a cunning twinkle in his eye :

‘ You see, sir, in most places hereabouts the wood had to be cut down, lest it should afford shelter to the Scotch borderers when they came to harry us.’


‘ What are you talking about, John Lamb ?’ said the matter-of-fact Tony, suspending his gambols with the dog, and speaking with an air of supreme contempt. ‘ Why, ’tis hundreds of years since the Scots borderers used to come, and ’tis no

more than five since my mother had the clump of beeches felled, that used to be at the bottom of this very grass plot. I used to go every day to see them cut, for I liked to see them tumble with a great crash. I was just six years old then, and, Mr. Hog, there's been lots more felled since.'

'I understand,' said Mr. Hog, with a shrug of his shoulders; then pointing with his stick at some of the yews and hollies cut into fantastic shapes, he expressed his regret that such fine trees should have been so disfigured.

'Oh, sir, don't you like them?' asked Tony, opening his eyes very wide; 'my mother does, and so do I. Look at that holly; isn't it fine? it is an elephant with a tower on his back, and that box tree is a fox, and the yew next it is a giant.'

'Thank you, Tony, for your explanation,' replied Mr. Hog with a grim smile, 'for without it, I am bound to say I shouldn't have known what those monsters were meant for.'



‘I say, Mr. Lamb,’ observed Mr. Hog to the steward, ‘I see that you’ve got one sensible thing in your garden, and that’s beehives.’

‘Don’t I like honey?’ murmured Tony with a sigh of satisfaction; ‘only mother never lets me have enough.’

‘Yes, you have very fine honey in this country, and,’ added Hog, after a moment’s pause, ‘very fine mutton, Mr. Lamb. I say ’tis excellent though small, and I say I’ll give it the palm even over our own, and that’s going very far.’

‘Well, I am mortal glad there’s something to your mind, sir,’ said Lamb, in a somewhat discontented tone, for he had not yet recovered from Mr. Hog’s strictures on his lady’s want of taste in her garden, ‘but, you see, the bees gather on the heather when it’s in bloom in September, and the sheep, they feed on the heather too, and on the mountain herbage, and that’s sweet.’

‘Then it’s no thanks to you Westmoreland farmers that your mutton is so good,’

replied Hog jocosely; 'and I say, meaning no offence to you, Mr. Lamb,' continued the fault-finder, 'I do not think you understand farming in these parts as well as we folk north of the Border.'

'Nay, nay, sir, excuse me, I'll not allow that neither,' replied Lamb rather tartly.

'It's the truth, nathless,' said Mr. Hog, with a provoking smile. 'I say I could bring a long list of faults against your farmers. They've no thrift, no economy. I say, Mr. Lamb, you don't improve your turf and peat lands; you've pigs, and in good condition, too, that I'll allow, but before you sell 'em, they've eaten their heads off. You feed 'em too much on oatmeal and blue milk, and then you don't plant turnips enough, and your potatoes, I say——' Here the speaker paused for a moment to recover his breath.

'What of my potatoes, sir?' exclaimed the steward, somewhat irritated, as he smote one hand with his clenched fist. 'I defy any man to show better!'

'I say nothing against their quality, for

I have been eating them at your mistress' table, and they were very good; potatoes are a luxury now, but I say that before many years pass, farmers will plant them as a field crop,' replied Hog, very calmly and deliberately; 'but it seems to me that your crops must be very backward; that was what I was going to observe when you interrupted me. Now when did you set those in that garden plot yonder? they are hardly come up yet.'

'I planted them in May,' said the steward in a somewhat sullen tone, for the compliment as to their quality failed to mollify him.

Mr. Hog gave a long whistle, and then exclaimed with an ironical laugh, very galling to Lamb:

'Zounds! you are more than a month behind all the rest of England.'

'Maybe,' replied Lamb in a cooler tone, 'but you see, sir, we have a deal of wet in these parts, and our land has a hard bottom of brownish clay with only a thin surface of light earth.'

‘I say,’ said Mr. Hog sententiously, as he struck the ground with his stick, ‘you should plough deeper, plough deeper, I say.’

‘What! plough up the clay?’ replied Lamb with a smile, in which lurked something of derision; ‘ods my life, sir, ’twould throw up the dead earth and starve our crops.’

‘I say, try it, and your tenants will double their crops, and be able to pay your lady double rents.’

‘Live and learn, they say,’ remarked the steward, who was struck with Mr. Hog’s last remark. ‘I’ll take your advice, sir, and try. I wish we could get better rents, but you see, sir, taxes are very heavy, and farmers are grumbling mighty hard. Howsoever, my duty as well as my wish is to do the best I can for Madam Witham.’

Mr. Hog nodded his head in approval of Lamb’s willingness to be instructed, and then said very emphatically—

‘Ods my life, but you will have to make

your men work harder than they do now. I say, I never saw such a set of idle dogs. Egad, our Scotch farmers would teach 'em a lesson. It wouldn't pay us just to scrape the top of the land and then sow it. Why, Tony here does as much when he is grubbing in his garden. But dig deeper, Tony, dig deeper,' added Mr. Hog, addressing the boy.

'I hate digging,' replied that young gentleman, with a look of profound disgust; 'it makes my back ache. Hallo! there's Andrew bringing Gipsy round; hurrah!' and here Master Tony, after first executing a summersault on the grass, ran towards the house to meet the man who was leading the rough-haired pony and the strong brown cob which Mr. Hog rode.

'That lad's like quicksilver,' muttered Mr. Hog; 'but I say, Mr. Lamb,' he added, as he followed the volatile Tony, 'it's bad management, sir, bad management not to plough deeper. Every kind of earth is capable of giving nourishment

to plants. You see, your thin surface earth has long been exhausted. I say, make your tenants plough deep and turn up the clay, and let it be fallow, so that it may get the air, and the sun, and the frost, and then it will get into condition to give double what you now get off it, I say.'

'Oh, I'll do as you say, sir,' interposed Lamb, 'and if your plan succeeds, I shall be vastly beholden to you for your good advice.'

'And you've got it without paying for it,' said Mr. Hog jocosely; 'and I say, it's a great thing that, always to get as much as you can for nothing; that's a piece of my advice too. And I say, Mr. Lamb, I've a word more to say before I go; remember that it is an exploded notion that——'

'If we don't start soon, sir,' interposed Tony, who had mounted his pony and was getting very impatient of this long discussion, 'it will be dark before we get home!'

'Zounds! that will never do,' exclaimed Mr. Hog, placing his hand on the saddle

and preparing to mount his sturdy cob. 'Your roads are really execrable, Mr. Lamb, the ruts in 'em are a yard deep, and if it had not been for the paved carriers' track, I don't know how we should ever have got here. If we let it get dark, we shall miss the track, for it is not much over a foot wide. Zounds! we shall then tumble in some of the confounded ruts.'

'Our roads be rayther rough,' replied Lamb, with a grin; 'but they be no worse than the roads in other countries.'

'The King's highways! they call 'em,' exclaimed Mr. Hog, with a contemptuous smile. 'I say, Mr. Lamb, I suppose it's not treason to say that King George should be ashamed of his highways,' and here the Scotch gentleman chuckled over his joke.

'Well, you be not far wrong,' replied Lamb, laughing.

'But I say, Mr. Lamb, until you get better roads the estate will not improve much,' remarked Mr. Hog sententially.

‘But I say,’ he continued in the same tone, ‘you will have turnpike roads here, some time or other, since the late Turnpike Act, though, egad ! some of the turnpike roads I have seen are no better than the highways, and I don’t wonder at the riots about ’em. Folk don’t like to pay for tolls anyhow, and zounds ! who can blame ’em for not liking to pay for bad roads ? I say, when I pay, I like to have my money’s worth.’

‘Mr. Hog,’ cried out Tony, as he impatiently brandished his little hunting-whip, ‘do you know that there is robbery sometimes on that moor we have to cross ?’

‘What do you say ?’ exclaimed Mr. Hog in alarm.

‘Yes,’ continued Tony, ‘and there is a man hung in chains not far off the road. Is there not, Mr. Lamb ? And oh, my heart, how the chains do rattle sometimes.’

‘Bless my life, Mr. Lamb, are your roads so unsafe ?’ asked Mr. Hog, hastily

taking out his leather purse to see how much he had in it.

‘Lord, sir, Master Tony does not know what he is talking about,’ replied the steward in a reassuring tone, as he cast a side-glance at that young gentleman, who having been keen enough to perceive how fond of money Mr. Hog was, now mischievously tried to hasten his departure by exciting his fears. ‘Our roads,’ continued Lamb, ‘are safe enough. To be sure, there’s a man hanging in chains, but it’s not for robbery ; it’s only for murder.’

‘Murder!’ exclaimed Mr. Hog, aghast, ‘only for murder! did you say?’

‘I did not mean it as you take it, sir,’ replied Lamb apologetically; ‘the man was not a highwayman. It was Tom Colley, who was hung for drowning old Ruth Osborne for being a witch. There were more folks with Tom, but Tom put her in the water.’

‘I say, that is very shocking,’ remarked Mr. Hog with a shudder.

‘I am with you there, sir,’ replied Lamb.

‘He was hung very near the pit where the old woman was drowned. He would have been hung a week sooner than he was, but, Lord, sir, when the constables and hangman came to take him out of prison there was such a mob that they were afraid he would be rescued, so they had to send for a guard of horse soldiers to take him to the gibbet. They carried him in a chaise along with the hangman at five in the morning, and after he was turned off and was dead they hung him in chains. Lord, sir, none of the folks would go and see him hanged, for they said it was a hard case to hang a man for putting an old woman out of the way who had done so much damage with her witcheries.’

‘This is really very dreadful,’ exclaimed Mr. Hog; ‘but I say, such superstitions are very prevalent in country parts.’

‘I don’t myself believe in witches,’ observed Lamb, as if to qualify Mr. Hog’s last general assertion, ‘but many of our farmers do; howsoever, I’ll warrant you’ll be in Appleby afore it’s dark.’

As if Mr. Hog was determined that the steward should not be mistaken as to the time of their arrival at Appleby, he pushed his horse on at a brisk trot on the carriers' track, which ran alongside the high-road, Tony, mounted on little Gipsy, following, there not being width enough for them to ride abreast.

Somewhat barren-looking, certainly, was the country surrounding Kirby Stephen, and the highway leading from thence to Appleby very well merited Hog's denunciations. It was little better than a narrow lane or dirty road, full of ruts and holes from one foot to three feet deep.

'Good Lord, what an execrable road ! How does your mother dare travel in the carriage over it ? 'Tis a thousand chances to one whether or no she might not be tumbled over in one of these ruts and break her neck or her limbs. Ods my life, I'll warrant that some of those ruts are four feet deep.'

'Suppose we get down, Mr. Hog, and

measure 'em,' suggested Tony, who was always very practical, and the boy drew in his pony as he spoke.

'Come along, child,' replied Hog impatiently; 'let us make haste on. 'Tis one of the vilest roads I ever travelled, and I have been on vile roads before now.'

A vile road indeed it was, scarcely wide enough to let two vehicles pass each other, so that if they happened to meet, one would have to draw on one side, probably at the risk of being overturned in some ditch, while the other passed forward. The numerous holes and ruts floated with mud in winter and wet weather, and were repaired only here and there, and that by the tumbling into them of some loose stones, which, so far as carriages were concerned, would certainly answer no other object than that of jolting them most mercilessly, at the risk of dislocating the joints of the unhappy travellers.


At one point, where a lane branched off from the highway, Mr. Hog and Tony came up to a farm-cart, helplessly broken

down from having plunged into one of the deepest of the ruts, and now completely obstructing the narrow highway against any other carriage. This cart, like most in the northern counties at that time, was of so very primitive a make as to elicit from the Scotch gentleman a somewhat uncomplimentary expression of his opinion of farming in Westmoreland. It was not furnished with wheels and spokes, but it rolled slowly along on wheels of solid wood and most ponderous weight. In short, the wheels were like those of a baby's toy-cart.

Though Kirby Stephen had been left some way behind by our two travellers, the landscape still retained its bare and rugged appearance. The cottages, or rather hovels, of the peasantry were of the most miserable description, the arable land, in quantity, was nearly equalled by the mountains and moorland and weedy wastes, whilst the country was so thinly populated, that at a short distance only from villages

and towns, which were few and far between, vast solitudes existed, lonely enough indeed, even on a bright summer evening, to excite fears in a timorous traveller with a well-filled purse.

But at length the scene begins to change, the landscape assumes a more pleasing and a softer aspect, the rocky hill sides and towering fells, where the eagle, so destructive of young lambs and game, builds her eyrie, recede, and as the sun dips lower in the west, their lofty summits are only seen veiled under a golden haze. On either side the road stretches a vast extent of level country. Meadows gently undulating in green slopes and hollows, clumps of fine trees dotted about, and the grey walls of a better sort of farm-houses are seen here and there through the thick foliage. The low limestone walls surrounding the fields give place here to hedges of hawthorn and hazel, and in place of the bare brown sides of the hills and rugged fells, the road winds betwixt pasture lands where the green turf is studded with the gold-



coloured petals of the buttercup, and the starry white flowers of the oxlip.

Only one more tract of moorland had now to be passed over by Mr. Hog and his little companion, and this, indeed, was as bare and desolate as any of the solitudes nearer to Kirby Stephen. It was a dark, spongy, marshy piece of ground, broken and irregular, dotted over with black-looking pools of water, dimly seen under long grass, patches of dark brown earth, bordered by tufts of yellow gorse, thickets of broom, and hollows filled with heather still in its winter attire, though young tender green shoots were now beginning to spring up amongst it.


‘This is the moor where Tom Colley hangs in chains. You can’t see him from here ; he is behind those birch trees. Isn’t it a dreadful-looking sort of place?’ said Tony, edging his pony closer to Mr. Hog.

‘Ay, ’tis indeed, child,’ replied the latter, looking in some surprise at his small companion, who appeared very grave, a most unusual mood for him.

‘Oh, but it’s more dreadful than ever in winter,’ said Tony, with something like a shiver, even on that warm summer evening, ‘when it’s all covered with snow, you know, and you can’t see the pools. And our old nurse has told us ever such a dreadful story about it; it hasn’t aught to do with Tom Colley and the witch, but it’s quite true, and there’s a ghost in it.’

‘Tut, tut, child, why does your nurse frighten you with such idle tales? There are no ghosts.’

‘There are, though,’ replied Tony stoutly, ‘and this is the ghost of a priest. A long time ago, long even before you was born’—for Tony, like most children, considered grown-up people to be very old indeed—‘a priest came to stop near Appleby, where there was a Catholic gentleman, who lived at some hall, I forget its name, and the pursuivants came after him—those were the men that used to hunt for the priests,’ added Tony, as though by way of explanation to his companion, ‘but he got away, and wandered



to this moor. Then it began to snow very hard, oh, so hard! and he lost the track, and he was frozen to death.' These last words the little speaker uttered in a quavering tone, and he jogged his pony on for a few moments in silence.

'Poor man!' said Mr. Hog, with a sigh; 'twas very sad.'

'Yes, and in the cold winter,' continued Tony, in a solemn voice, 'when the snow falls and it comes on dark, he walks—I mean his ghost—he wanders about as if he was trying to find his way, and wrings his hands. There's many a one has seen him. I hope I'll never see him—not even when I am a big man.'

A strange sensation passed over Mr. Hog as the boy spoke; he could almost fancy that he saw the whirling snow, and the solitary figure flitting about on the margin of the dark pools, and whilst his ears seemed to be filled with the plaintive moan of the snow-wind, he shivered, as though its icy breath were really upon him. So strong was the delusion, that it was

some few minutes before he could shake it off, and it was with a feeling of relief, though ashamed at what he deemed a silly weakness, that Roger Hog saw Appleby before him, lying embosomed in foliage, deep down in its green valley.



CHAPTER VII.

MARKET DAY AT APPLEBY.

It is Saturday, and Saturday was the market day in Appleby in the year 1751, as it is in the year 1883, and the market was held then, as now, in Boroughgate.

Boroughgate is by far the quaintest and prettiest part of this quaint and pretty old town ; and at the top of Boroughgate, near the castle-gate, stood Mr. Roger Hog, gazing down the picturesque old street with a look expressive of both interest and amusement.

Perhaps our readers may not weary of some slight description of the old county town of Westmoreland ; if so, we would wish them to take their stand, in imagina-

tion, alongside Mr. Hog in Boroughgate, and we will try to place it before them, for its main features are unchanged, spite of the lapse of a hundred years, and as we saw it only a few years ago, so Mr. Hog saw it on the bright June morning of the day succeeding that on which he had ridden from Kirby Stephen.

At the far end of Boroughgate stands the cloister, an arched stone passage, with a tower at either end, and behind it, shadowing a green turf-covered grave-yard, belted with dark foliage to the left, rises the low square tower of the old church.

You may see all this from the height on which you stand at the castle-gate.

As you walk down the carriage-way, paved with stones, you may notice steep grassy banks, sloping from either side above you to the edges of the broad thoroughfare, along each of which high banks stands a row of irregularly built old houses, looking down, as it were, upon the street below them.

We have called it a street, but in truth

it is most unlike the noisy, dull, and monotonous brick-built line of houses which we picture to ourselves by the word street. True, there are houses on either side, but their roofs are overshadowed by the branches of fine old trees, and flowering plants creep over their walls. Here are thatched cottages with high-pitched roofs, and windows deep set in recesses and bordered round with facings of dark red stone, while columns of woodbine are trained over their rough-cast walls; and side by side with these cottages are two or three more pretentious habitations, confronted by a row of trees, trimmed into the semblance of arches of bright green foliage, the little gardens before them glowing with roses of every hue, from deepest crimson to creamy tints of yellow. Houses of every form of architecture, and of every size, may be seen.

Proceeding up Boroughgate and nearing the castle-gate, there are two or three houses with walls of smooth stone, of a dusky red, having each a flight of steps,

leading up to a wide entrance door. The most stately of these houses was in the occupation of Mrs. Witham, and it stood opposite a row of stone-built cottages with windows filled with flower-pots, and having an entrance-door in the centre, with a coat of arms over it, opening into a courtyard, planted with sycamores, under whose pleasant shade old women sat or pottered up and down with happy contented faces. This was St. Ann's Hospital, founded by the good Countess of Pembroke.

Dull and quiet and deserted as Boroughgate is on other days, it is gay and bustling and noisy on a market day, and thronged from end to end. Substantial sturdy-looking British farmers, with broad shoulders and mighty chests, discuss the prospects of the future harvest under the shadow of the Moot House, an ancient building with rough-cast walls standing in the middle of the street, and noisy little urchins flock about the flight of broad stone steps, which lead to the upper part of the building. Higher up the street,

much business is being done in the rough stone-built sheds, known as the Butchers' Shambles.

Market women, some young and neatly dressed in grey russets and home-spun gowns and petticoats, others old and staid, yet fresh and hearty-looking, are standing with baskets before them, full of fresh butter and eggs. Here is one stall covered with baskets of gooseberries and cherries, and hard by, another spread with gaily painted toys. A tinman exhibits pots and pans next to a woman, whose stall is spread over with that feminine article of apparel known under the name of stays, artistically worked, mayhap, by the village tailor himself. With the loud hubbub of voices mingle the squeaking of young pigs, imprisoned under network of strong twine, in market carts, the cackling of poultry, confined in hen-coops and baskets, and the bleating of some dismayed and frightened sheep, grouped together on the lower part of the grass-grown pavements, sloping down from St. Ann's Hospital.

Having stood, as we have already said, for some few minutes, watching the busy scene beneath him, Mr. Hog himself joined the crowd of market people and their customers. He had not proceeded far before he found Master Tony Witham, with his hands stuck in his pockets, wistfully eyeing the stall of toys. Mr. Hog also halted at the stall, and began critically examining sundry fishing-rods, hair-lines, and painted floats, and asked their price, upon which Tony interposed, descanting most eloquently upon their merits; but if the would-be young sportsman had expected Mr. Hog to present him with fishing-tackle, he was destined to be grievously disappointed, for that economical and cautious gentleman, after uttering some disparaging reflections upon the extortion of English traders in general, and of the Appleby traders in particular, enriched Master Tony with the munificent sum of one penny, telling him, with a smile of complacency, to buy anything he fancied.

With no very marked expression of gratitude on his face, that disappointed young gentleman trudged after Mr. Hog as he pushed his way through the crowded market, now pausing to taste the butter and cheese, then to criticise the Westmoreland hams and the sides of fat bacon. Halting before some small mountain sheep, he would handle them, and smiling at the farm man, pronounce their wool to be very thick and fine; and then pinching the young pigs, he nodded approvingly, observing that he felt that their skins were nice, and soft, and loose, and that he was sure they would fatten up very well. But if Mr. Hog approved of the pigs' skins, they did not approve of his pinches, as they evidenced by their shrill squeaks; and when Tony, imitating Mr. Hog, inserted his finger and thumb between the wire network, and administered some sharp pinches to the imprisoned pigs, the squeaks became more discordant and doleful than ever, to the great amusement of that lively young gentleman. Tiring, however, at last, of

this pastime, and finding Mr. Hog deep in discussion with a farmer on the prospects of the forthcoming potato crop, Master Tony, with that delightful candour so characteristic of children, broke in upon the conversation with the remark :

‘ It is nearly dinner-time, Mr. Hog ; and please, sir, mamma said yesterday that she hoped you wouldn’t be so late again, for it was mighty tiresome.’

Conscious of his shortcomings as regards punctuality, Mr. Hog at once broke off his argument in favour of the early setting of potatoes, and returning to Mrs. Witham’s house, he, to that lady’s agreeable surprise, presented himself in her drawing-room a full half-hour before dinner.



CHAPTER VIII.

LONDON OR EDINBURGH.

MRS. WITHAM was a pretty little lady, looking girlish enough, indeed, spite of her being the mother of the four children grouped together in a corner of the room : Winifred, a discreet and sober little maiden of nine years, with dark brown hair, like her mother's, when undisguised by powder, and blue-grey eyes, like her brother Tony, and two little plump, blue-eyed romps, respectively aged seven and five, who were just then softly giggling and turning up their saucy noses over Mr. Hog's magnificent donation to Tony ; whilst that young gentleman himself was dividing his attention between his mother's pets, namely, a

harlequin greyhound called Juliet and a Dane, bearing the high-sounding cognomen of Hamlet.

Mrs. Witham was attired in deep mourning. Her dress was a black bombazine sacque, extended by a wide hoop, its sable hues only relieved by her white lawn bands, plain white lawn apron, and the snowy muslin kerchief which covered her neck. Mrs. Witham possessed a beautifully rounded arm, and a delicate hand with long slender fingers ; but at present hand and arm were concealed by black-glazed gloves, which reached up to her elbows, and were partly covered by the plain muslin ruffs depending from her short sleeves. Mr. Hog was no great admirer of the female fashions of the day ; but if he silently condemned Mrs. Witham's hoop, he condemned still more strongly the style in which her hair was dressed. Disfigured and disguised with powder, her own soft, silky-dark tresses were piled up to a considerable height off her forehead, and then the top of the pinnacle was surmounted by the smallest of

caps, made of plain muslin, ornamented with rosettes of black ribbon.


When Mr. Hog entered the room Mrs. Witham was softly fanning herself with a black crape fan, whilst one pretty little foot, cased in a shoe of black chamois leather, and just peeping out from beneath her dress, tapped the floor with an impatient movement.

Mr. Hog, perceiving that his hostess was somewhat abstracted and preoccupied, refrained from breaking in upon her reverie, and amused himself by making a mental calculation, probably for the hundredth time since he had been in the house, how much money now lay dead and unproductive by having been laid out in the purchase of the innumerable articles of porcelain with which it was crowded, and the marvellous skill with which Mrs. Witham, in her enormous hoop, sailed in and out between table and stands, and brackets, without knocking any of her treasures down. The room was certainly elegantly furnished, and it had been fitted up with the modern sash win-

dows—the frames of them, however, would now be deemed heavy and massive ; but her collection of porcelain, together with a pendulum clock—then very much in fashion—and which seemed to spring out of the oaken wainscot to which it was attached, were the articles in which Mrs. Witham placed her principal pride and delight.

There were stags, dogs, and huntsmen, china Brahmins and mandarins, the latter sitting cross-legged, and a chinaware pagoda on a stand ; but besides these curious and somewhat exaggerated specimens of art in the manufacture of porcelain, there were some very beautiful articles in Dresden china dispersed about the apartment, consisting of human figures, vases and jars painted with fruit and flowers, baskets of mosaic work and escritaires.

On a small sideboard, in a corner of the room, was arranged a beautiful set of valuable porcelain for tea, the groundwork whereof was pink and white in compartments, on each of which were painted birds, insects, and flowers, exquisitely executed,



and as near to nature, both in beauty and liveliness of colour, as it was possible to be. This tea-service, which she prized very highly, had been a present to Mrs. Witham from her husband, and had cost forty guineas, a fact of which she had, not with the best taste, it must be allowed, apprized Mr. Hog when showing it to him. He, good man, had heaved a sigh whilst surveying this fine Dresden china, which the lady complacently attributed to envy, on her friend's part, of her good fortune in possessing such a treasure, though, in very truth, that economical gentleman was sighing over what he deemed a sinful waste of money, and saying to himself, 'Ods my life, who could imagine such a thing? A country squire to pay forty guineas for a few rubbishy cups and saucers!' Still greater had been Mr. Hog's disgust when Mrs. Witham informed him how Tony had once broken a cup, and what distress of mind she was in; but that most happily the set had not been spoiled, since she had been able to procure another from the Royal Magazine at

Meiden, near Dresden, though it had cost a deal of money. A beautiful set of old Japan china with brown edges, consisting of cups, plates, and saucers, arranged on a small round table, and figures of men and women on the mantel-piece, completed the list of the lady's porcelain treasures.

Mr. Hog at length, tired of his inspection and monetary calculations, and looking for some object which might furnish a theme wherewith to break the silence, said somewhat abruptly, as he glanced at his fair hostess :

‘I say, you are still in deep mourning for the Prince of Wales, I see, ma'am ; but do you know that the deep mourning ends on the 20th of this month, and the Lord Chamberlain has fixed the time for the second mourning to begin on the 7th of next month and end on the 6th of October?’

To the astonishment and no small dismay of Mr. Hog, this item of news produced an apparently most painful effect upon the fair young widow, who, bursting into tears, sobbed hysterically for a few minutes, and

then began to utter some disjointed sentences bearing reference to her dear departed husband.

Mr. Hog, innocent man, who had forgotten all about the dear departed, at once saw the blunder he had committed, and hastened to offer some words of condolence and sympathy, gently reminding the fair widow that time softened the most poignant and the keenest grief.

‘It may in some cases, but in mine never, oh never—never!’ replied Mrs. Witham pathetically. ‘I shall weep for him to the last day of my life ; and I shall never throw off my deep mourning—no, never!’ she reiterated, casting a severely mournful glance upon Mr. Hog, on whose face she fancied she had detected a faint smile of incredulity.

In this surmise she had not been mistaken, for her old friend felt pretty certain in his own mind that sooner or later Mrs. Witham would both cast off her deep mourning dress and also contract a second marriage ; and the more vehemently she

lamented the dear departed, the more firmly did the preconceived idea of Mr. Hog become fixed on his brain.

‘And what will be done about Prince Frederick’s fatherless family?’ exclaimed Mrs. Witham. ‘I vow and protest that I can feel for them, for are not my poor little ones in the same sad position?’

‘It is thought Prince George will succeed to all his father’s titles without any new creation,’ replied Mr. Hog; ‘but if the King should die whilst he is still a minor, the Duke of Cumberland and some other great officers of state have been appointed to form a regency along with the dowager Princess of Wales.’

‘Happy mother! happy children!’ exclaimed Mrs. Witham.

Mr. Hog looked astonished, and was about to make some remark, and had actually commenced as usual, ‘I say, ma’am,’ when the lady cut him short, and in a pathetic tone of voice, went on to say:

‘Alack-a-day, my poor little ones have no fond uncle to supply the place of their

dead father. What will be the future of my darling wretches ? I tremble to think of it. But, Mr. Hog,' continued the widowed mother, passing abruptly from the pathetic to a subject interesting to her female heart, and at the same time changing her woeful expression of countenance to one more lively, 'you said that the second mourning for the Prince was to begin soon ; can you tell me what the ladies are to wear ?'

Mr. Hog could hardly repress a smile at this sudden transition from the pathetic to the common-place ; but he was not much surprised, for he had known his fair friend from her childhood, so he quietly replied :

'Why, really, ma'am, I cannot exactly tell you. I have heard that they are to wear black silk sacques and white gloves ; but I say, ma'am, you were just talking of fond uncles. Egad, I hope that the Duke of Cumberland loves his brother's children better than he did his brother ; if not, they would be better without a fond uncle. But I say,' continued Mr. Hog in a more

sympathetic tone, 'why should you distress yourself about the future of your little ones? I can really see no cause for anxiety, my dear madam.'

'I vow I have a hundred !' exclaimed Mrs. Witham ; and having made this assertion in a very emphatic tone, she at once laid two of the hundred causes before Mr. Hog : firstly, the difficulty she felt, only, as she assured him, on her children's account, in settling on a place of residence ; and secondly, the serious matter of their education.

Mr. Hog raised his eyebrows in unfeigned astonishment.

'I say, my dear madam, I thought you was settled in Appleby.'

'Settled in Appleby !' replied Mrs. Witham, in a tone of reproach. 'Really, Mr. Hog, I vow and protest ! What ! in a retired out-of-the-world place like this ? No, my dear sir, when I left Birkswick I knew that Appleby could only be a temporary resting-place. I owe duties to my offspring, and more especially must I con-

sider my darling girls. I must seek society on their account.'

'To be sure, but I say, there's time enough yet to look out for husbands for 'em.'

'I vow, sir, you quite shock me,' exclaimed Mrs. Witham rather tartly, as she fanned herself energetically. 'I protest, sir, I was not thinking of such a thing; 'twill be years before they are of marriageable age.'

'Ay, to be sure, but I say, there'll be marriages enough before then,' observed Mr. Hog in a thoughtful tone.

'The time is not so very far distant when Winifred will be improved by polite society and fashionable amusements. I vow and protest, sir, that there is no society here, or in any country town, but the lawyers and doctors, who are very clownish, and the parsons, who are not much more agreeable company. They are never at ease but when they are along with each other, and they would rather smoke at the steward's table than at the

master's. I have serious thoughts of going to London.'

Mr. Hog started at this unexpected announcement, but he made no immediate answer to the lady's remark. He was indeed sorry to hear that she entertained any idea of going to London. He, good thrifty man as he was, shuddered at the bare thought of what Mrs. Witham's expenditure would be should she carry her plan into execution, and under the plea of seeking, at some remote period, society for her girls, launch herself forth- with into the vortex of modern dissipation in the great metropolis.

'I say, ma'am, I would not go to London,' said Hog at length in a very emphatic tone; 'everything is ruinously dear there, for the taxes at present are unusually heavy; the whole country is crying out against them. I say they are veritable mill-stones round our necks; you must suffer from them even in this remote spot; but in the capital, ma'am, I say you will feel this grievance still more acutely.'

The cost of living there now is enormous ; I say it is simply frightful. If you are at an inn, for instance, and choose to call at night for a bowl of porridge instead of the landlord's high-priced French claret, he and his waiters insult you.'

'Oh, Lud ! I vow I am not surprised at that, Mr. Hog,' said Mrs. Witham, pettishly, for she was not pleased that her friend should not coincide with her views of a residence in London ; 'what profits could an innkeeper get an all his customers called for porridge ? but, oh lor',' and here the lady indulged in a laugh at her friend's expense, 'I vow you was always so fond of it ! My poor dear husband loved his joke, you know, and he used to say you had eaten enough in your time to plaster a house with.'

Here Mrs. Witham paused to laugh again, though she shed tears at the same time over this pleasantry of the departed.

Mr. Hog, however, did not seem quite to relish the jest, which his fair hostess perceiving, tried to turn it off by asking

him if he would take anything before dinner.

‘No, thank you, ma’am; I never whet before dinner; it may give an appetite, as some think, but it is a vicious habit, and a needless expense too,’ replied Mr. Hog, drily; and then he immediately began to descant still more strongly on the advisability of avoiding London as a settled place of residence.

‘But where would you have me to go, then?’ asked the little widow, tapping the ground again impatiently with her foot.

‘I say, ma’am, why not go to Edinburgh?’ replied Mr. Hog abruptly, after considering for a few seconds. ‘I say you will have there all the conveniences and society of a city, combined with cheap and excellent living, and in no place could you find greater educational advantages for your children.’

‘I vow and protest, sir, you take my breath away with such sudden proposals,’ exclaimed the widow, who seemed, however, rather struck by this new idea; ‘but then how should I manage there? Lord

Milthorpe, our neighbour at Kirby Stephen, hath more than once stayed in Scotland, and so has his son, Captain Wharton, who is in my Lord Ancrum's horse regiment, and I have heard them say that the inns are mean buildings, and their rooms dirty and dismal.'

'I say, you would not think of living in an inn, surely,' replied Mr. Hog; 'you would take lodgings—the letting of lodgings is a business of itself in Edinburgh, but I say, there is one drawback,' he added: 'the prices charged are very high, very high indeed,' he reiterated, shaking his head gravely.

'Oh, I should not mind that,' replied Mrs. Witham, in a tone of careless indifference, which made Hog shake his head still more solemnly; 'but Captain Wharton told me he was but poorly accommodated in lodgings, and that the lodging-house people in Edinburgh try to scrape together all the sorry old furniture they have, and crowd the rooms with the things, just to make a show of all the

conveniences of the rooms before strangers. And then the cooking! O Lord! I vow, I protest——'

'I suppose Captain Wharton is a pock-pudding, like all Englishmen,' interposed Mr. Hog with a sneer.

'And he had to send to a tavern,' continued Mrs. Witham, not noticing this aspersion on her countrymen, 'and oh, la, sir, his dinners were villainously dressed. But,' continued Mrs. Witham, in a more conciliatory tone, for she observed that her abuse of Edinburgh was far from being pleasant to her old friend, 'I should perhaps like Edinburgh, for my Lord Milthorpe has often spoken of the good society that was to be had there.'

'You might take a furnished house,' replied Mr. Hog, after a little consideration; 'or, I say, a flat would suit you vastly. Do you know what a flat is?'

'I think I do. Captain Wharton has told me. One family lives on the top of another, ever so high,' replied the little lady, laughing, 'but I vow, if there are

nice families next me, I should like a flat vastly.'

'You might easily get a furnished flat from some family going into the country,' replied Mr. Hog.

'But I would take my own servants with me,' said Mrs. Witham, very emphatically, 'for Captain Wharton assured me that the maids there go about barefoot.'

'Ay, to be sure,' replied Mr. Hog, very quietly.

'If I should have any Scotch lassies, I vow I will make 'em wear shoes and stockings,' remarked the little widow, in a very determined tone; 'but I am mightily obliged to you, Mr. Hog, for your advice; and really I seriously think of taking it, and going to Edinburgh for the next few years. I vow and protest, sir, it will be charming to live near an old friend, such as yourself, to consult and advise with on my affairs. I should often surprise you at Newliston. I vow 'twould be a pleasant change for a few hours from the town.'

Mr. Hog looked slightly disconcerted at

this last remark, and possibly almost regretted the friendly feeling which had prompted him to suggest Edinburgh as her future home to a lady who had deliberately announced her intention beforehand of intruding often upon that hospitality which he accorded but grudgingly to any of his friends.

However, he comforted himself with the reflection that Mrs. Witham would be too much enamoured of the polite society of Edinburgh to intrude often on the privacy of his quiet and essentially country home at Newliston.

‘I say, ma’am, you have an honest, sensible fellow in that steward of yours,’ said Mr. Hog somewhat abruptly, as he perceived from the window that very individual coming through a wicket-gate at the bottom of the garden.

‘Yes, I have every confidence in him.’

‘I say you are right, ma’am,’ replied Hog with considerable emphasis. ‘He is a shrewd, sensible, painstaking man; and modest withal, not ashamed either to take a word of advice. He saw the worth of

my argument in favour of ploughing deeper, and he'll have it done, I'll warrant.'

Mrs. Witham, who was secretly marvel-ling at the high favour in which Mr. John Lamb stood with her visitor, marvelled now no longer; for to take Mr. Hog's advice was, as she was well aware, a sure way ever of earning Mr. Hog's esteem and goodwill.

'I say, ma'am, there's your turves and peats, too; I and your steward had a little conversation anent that matter; and he took what I said all in very good part, though I did blame the management. You see, I said to him, "Your lady doesn't improve her turf and peat lands to the utmost, and yet turves and peats make good fuel, and you might save a deal of your wood, both for madam and the tenants." I say he is a sensible fellow, that John Lamb, for he caught at the idea directly; yes, he is certainly the shrewdest fellow I have seen on this side the Border.'

'What do you mean by turves and

peats? Are they not all turves?' asked Mrs. Witham, who, though she had lived some years in the country, was the merest neophyte on rural matters.

'I say, ma'am, your people must cut deeper; the turf is got from the surface, and the peat from underneath. I am speaking of what may be got from bogs and rotten ground.'

'My people do cut from all the bogs,' exclaimed Mrs. Witham, a little emphatically.

'Ay, from the surface,' replied the learned agriculturist, with a slightly contemptuous smile. 'They never cut deeper than a foot or so; if they did, your income would be increased.'

'Ay, Mr. Hog, I begin to see the truth of what you say,' exclaimed Mrs. Witham, with a deep sigh, 'and it brings more forcibly to my mind my lonely and unhappy position. My dearest departed Tony,' she continued, as she raised her handkerchief to her eyes, 'would have seen to all this.'

Mr. Hog, who, from personal acquaintance with the dear departed Tony, suspected that he knew as little about such matters as did his disconsolate widow, replied :

‘I say your steward is a sensible fellow, and can take advice, so you need have no fear but that he’ll do the best for you. I have told him that if he will cut some yards deeper under the first cutting for turf, he will come to the peat, which will burn excellently, and however deep he cuts, the hole will fill up again in a few years, and then he may cut again, d’ye see, but it should be cut in summer-time, and then your lands may be made more profitable.’

‘And bring us better rents?’ inquired the lady eagerly.

‘I say they may, and might have done so before if your people had not been too idle and ignorant to know what things are of use and what are not. I’ve been used to make the most of things, ma’am. I was bred on a farm before I went to London,

and was taught thrifty ways. I say you might let your heath land for a good rent, or send a deal of your peat to be sold at Kirby, ay, and at Appleby too, instead of letting it all be wasted. I say, ma'am, ignorance and idleness are the greatest enemies to thrift.'

'La, Mr. Hog, I have many acres of heath and bog lands that do not bring in a farthing of rent,' exclaimed Mrs. Witham, smiling. 'I vow and protest I am vastly obliged to you, sir, for giving Lamb so many good hints, and I am glad that my opinion of his trustworthiness is backed by yours, because I shall feel more easy when I leave here, whether for London or Edinburgh.'

Here the entrance of a servant announcing dinner broke up the conversation, to the infinite relief of Master Tony and his little sisters, who had stolen, once or twice, into the lobby to inhale the savoury smell of the dishes as they were brought from the kitchen to the dining-room.



CHAPTER IX.

THE KING'S AULD TOLBOOTH.

IN the blazing sunlight of an August morning, the grim and massive prison of the old Scottish capital looked, by contrast, more dark and threatening than was its wont. Yet time had been, and that time not remote, when to the terrors of its frowning walls, and dreary iron-barred windows, had been added that most grim and ghastly sight the heads and dismembered limbs of the victims doomed by sanguinary laws to suffer death in cases of high treason. There the head of the gallant Montrose had blackened and withered for many a year, till at length tardy honours were rendered to the brave and

loyal cavalier, and his head was removed, soon to be replaced by that of the rebellious Marquis of Argyle.

It is not, however, with the exterior of the King's auld Tolbooth that we are now concerned, but with the interior of the grim old pile, once the seat of the National Parliament, but which now, turned to base uses, served as a prison for criminals and felons, and for the poor debtors, whose only crime too often was their poverty.

In an upper apartment of the Tolbooth, a scantily furnished dingy room, sat a young man. He was, as might be seen, though in a sitting posture, tall of stature, and of a robust and strongly built frame. To strikingly handsome features were added an exceedingly pleasant and winning expression of countenance, whilst his fine blue eyes were full of life and animation; yet there was at times a certain wildness in their glance, which, coupled with a restless manner, an exuberance of mirth, and an occasional low rambling talk addressed to himself, betrayed a mind


which had slightly, at least, lost its balance. This is James Robertson, the laird of Kincraigie, whom we last saw at Inverness, after the battle of Culloden. Small wonder that there are already lines on the handsome brow and about the finely cut mouth, or silver threads in his fair hair. For, for three long weary years, barely clad and half famished, he had wandered about amongst the rugged mountains and glens of his native Highlands, a proscribed and hunted fugitive, like his beloved Prince.

On the bloody field of Culloden he had seen for the last time Prince Charlie, whose name had been a treasured household word in his family so long as he could remember. Separated from him, he yet heard at intervals of his dangers, his wanderings, and his hair-breadth escapes, and rejoiced with an unspeakable joy when at last the news was bruited about that Charles Edward had embarked on board the French frigate *L'Heureux*, and was on his way to the friendly coasts of France.

Then, like other generous and devoted Highlanders, he flattered himself with the pleasing, but eventually illusory hope that the Prince would surely again return to his beloved Scotland to claim the crown of his ancestors, and again, like those true-hearted and hardy sons of the north, did Kincraigie vow that he would risk life and fortune for the cause of the exiled House of Stuart.

Utterly unselfish, the proscribed and hunted Jacobite rejoiced also in the happier fate of those of his friends who had escaped with the Prince, though deadly and imminent peril dogged his own footsteps, and menaced his life at every turn. Often obliged to hide in the most solitary and wildest parts of the mountains to escape being captured by the Duke of Cumberland's soldiery, he wanted both food and shelter, and could only obtain these, with any degree of regularity, when, the first heat of pursuit being over, he was able to return to his native place.

There he lay concealed, now in one




cottage and then in another of his father's tenantry, and these faithful peasants vied with each other in relieving the necessities of this the most beloved of the laird's sons.

The laird himself, good easy gentleman, being advanced in years, had remained quietly at home at the outbreak, and during the whole time of the insurrection, although he had secretly connived at and sanctioned the act of his gallant son in following the standard of Prince Charles. But the prudent old gentleman being well aware that the chances of war are uncertain, and therefore desirous, as he observed, to provide against the risk of his paternal estate dropping into the rapacious and capacious maw of the German Elector, sent for his man of business, as the family lawyer in Scotland is called, and directed him to make a deed of trust, vesting his property securely in trustees for the benefit of himself and his heirs.

Becoming rash at length by long immunity from capture, James Robertson began

to show himself more openly abroad, and so it came to pass that about three years after the fatal battle of Culloden, being recognised by an English officer commanding a party of soldiers at Perth, in which town he incautiously ventured himself, he was made prisoner, conveyed to Edinburgh, and immured in the Tolbooth, there to await his trial. His trial, however, had never taken place, and for this, several reasons may have been assigned. The length of time that had elapsed since the rising, the fact that the nation had begun to be satiated with the unrelenting vengeance taken by the Government on the unfortunate Jacobites, and that James Robertson had not held any very prominent position in the Prince's army, and above all, the influence of friends who had interest with those in power, who moreover were not unwilling to use it in behalf of a man whose singular kindness of heart and many amiable qualities endeared him to all who knew him.


As time went on, his relatives and



friends became aware of the melancholy fact that his once vigorous mind had become affected; still his mental disease had nothing in it that was painful to witness; on the contrary, he was more buoyant, more mirthful than of old, he seemed perfectly happy in himself, and his delusions were only odd conceits, which amused him rather than the reverse, whilst no shadow of gloom was ever perceptible either in his looks or his words. His lunacy, indeed, was first indicated in a pleasurable manner by a series of splendid entertainments which he gave in the Tolbooth to all those who chose to come, high and low, no matter who they were, and which gained for him the sobriquet of the Daft Laird. The insanity and harmlessness of the young laird of Kincraigie, for he had now succeeded to his deceased father, becoming at length known to the authorities, they determined to discharge him from gaol, and the day following that on which we open this chapter was to witness the termination of his captivity, and in com-

memoration of this auspicious event, he was about to give, within the prison walls, one of the grand entertainments or banquets we have alluded to.

Now, this farewell entertainment was to be on an unusually large and sumptuous scale; no fewer than three of that useful corps of errand boys called in the city by the name of caddies, young ragamuffins, who, though they had no other resting places at night than the common stairs leading to the different flats of the tall houses, could be trusted without any fear of their proving unfaithful to the confidence reposed in them, were engaged by the laird to convey his invitations to guests of the most motley kind; whilst one of the turnkeys had been running backwards and forwards the whole morning, collecting all the chairs and stools he could lay hands on, and ranging them down either side of the table, or rather tables, for two or three had been put together to make sufficient room for the guests. The turnkey having been now



despatched for about the twentieth time to the kitchen to see if the culinary preparations for the feast were progressing satisfactorily, the laird sat himself down to await the arrival of his guests, having first taken some pains with his toilette, for he always dressed neatly and in good taste.

On this present occasion, he wore a dark green cloth coat bound with gold, a waistcoat of the bright red and green Robertson tartan, and black cloth breeches with steel knee-buckles, buckles of the same metal adorning his shoes, whilst the very handsome and finely shaped legs of which, we must own, the laird was very proud, were cased in spotless white thread stockings. He wore his own fair hair unpowdered, and tied back with a ribbon, a blue cloth Highland bonnet being set rather jauntily on one side of his head.



CHAPTER X.

THE HIGHLAND LAIRD.

WITH a genial smile, and a countenance beaming welcome, the laird of Kincraigie sat at the head of a long table which extended down the middle of his room, whilst by word and gesture he invited his numerous guests to do justice to the plentiful repast spread out before them. So numerous, indeed, were the company, that the last comers had to seat themselves at the two ends of the room, where extra accommodation had been provided, in the shape of two small tables.


A strange and motley assemblage it was, and so thought a gentleman who sat on the laird's right hand, and who was, in

fact, our old acquaintance Mr. Roger Hog. This was the first time he had ever been in James Robertson's company, and he scarce knew which amused or amazed him most, the eccentricity of his host or the odd jumble of social rank that existed amongst the guests.

Mr. Hog himself had been introduced to the laird of Kincraigie by Bailie Lothian, a mutual friend, and a worthy cloth merchant in the High Street, who, in the course of his visits to the Tolbooth, in his magisterial capacity, had made the laird's acquaintance.

At the opposite end of the table sat Dr. Glen, his head adorned with a large full-bottomed wig, a man as renowned for his wealth, which he had acquired in the practice of his profession abroad, as for the tenacity with which he kept it, whilst, on one side, he was supported by Sandy Monro, a young medical student, full of mischief and frolic, and on the other, by another Monro, clad in a long blue gown, and wearing a blue bonnet, which he made

a point of keeping on his head, in order to display the large white cockade with which it was conspicuously adorned. This personage was no other than Colonel Monro, a frequenter of the streets of Auld Reekie and well known to all its inhabitants; a Highland hero, in fact, who had fought valiantly under the banners of Prince Charlie, for whom he ever loudly professed the most ardent devotion, though now, alas! he had fallen from his once heroic status, and had been forced to accept doles from the hated German Usurper, as a Royal Blue Gown Bedesman. In short, he was a licensed beggar, yet it was some solace to him, in his low estate, that he was always addressed as 'the Colonel' by his fellow-citizens. On the left hand of the Colonel sat Francis Home, another disciple of Æsculapius, equally full of frolic as Sandy Monro; this gentleman had served as a surgeon in a regiment of dragoons during the whole of the 'Seven Years' War,' and at its termination had settled in Edinburgh,



where he had just taken his degree of Doctor of Medicine.

Mr. Roger Hog, seated, as we have said, at the right hand of the laird, had for his next neighbour an old man who followed the useful calling of a cow-feeder, whilst the worthy Bailie Lothian jogged elbows with Captain Pillans of the Old City Guard, a whilom brewer in the Potter Row, of whom, if report spoke truly, it was said that he was fully as dexterous at handling a bottle as a sword, an insinuation which the rotundity of his paunch seemed to favour.

Amongst the company there were also two other brother officers of Pillans', captains of the same noble guard, all of whom had made the acquaintance of the laird when paying duty visits to the Tolbooth; and side by side, along with these gentlemen, sat a self-invited English Jack-tar, introduced by his friend, a fisherman from Newhaven, who generally supplied the laird with caller cod, caller haddies, and lobsters and crabs.

Conspicuous amongst this assemblage

was John Dhu, also a worthy member of the Old City Guard, a Highlander and a Macdonald by name and birth, Inverness being his native place. He was a strong, rough, fierce-visaged man, whose appearance presented a striking contrast to the meek-looking little barber who sat next to him, and who, having dressed the laird's pow in the morning, had been invited, in return for that service, to take a place at the banquet.

The complement of guests was now complete, when yet another arrived, in the person of one Jamie Duff, a tall, robust man, with a shrinking and shambling gait, whom the laird very politely and solemnly introduced in a formal manner to Mr. Hog, after which ceremony, lowering his voice to a whisper, and tapping his forehead significantly as he spoke, the good-natured host said, in a somewhat Lowland Scotch dialect, for, unlike the Western Highlanders, he did not speak English so purely :

‘ Puir chiel ! ye’ll perceive, sir, that he is a person of weak intellect, and fu’ o’ gro-

tesque peculiarities, whilk he is not aware of himself. Like a' daft folk, he hath one particular craze stronger than a' the rest; he will attend every funeral in the city, great or sma', and tak' his place at the head o' the procession, and the mourners maun hae him whether they will or no. Puir chiel, he is quite harmless.'

Utterly unconscious of his own impaired intellect, the laird gazed with a pitying eye on Jamie Duff, as the poor imbecile stood there stock-still, whilst one of the turnkeys, who was officiating as a waiter, was shifting the cow-feeder a little lower down, in order to arrange a place for the last comer next to Mr. Hog. Jamie's face still bore upon it traces of the most down-cast woe, edifying in the highest degree; for he had only just come straight from a funeral, and had not yet cast off his mourning attire. He was duly arrayed in crape, had on a white cravat, and white weepers on the cuffs of his sleeves, the weepers, however, being made of paper, whilst the cravat, like the rest of his attire, was in

very sorry condition. But his hat had been newly dyed that morning, as he informed the laird, turning himself round as he spoke, to show how the crape had been arranged so as to hang a little lower down his back, seeing that it was a funeral of unusual dignity which he had just attended, and which he wished to honour accordingly.

‘Weel, sit ye down, Jamie,’ said the laird, with a look of condescending pity for the poor man’s want of wits, ‘and mak’ a guid dinner, gin’ the air o’ the kirkyard has not ta’en thy appetite awa’.’

From the manner in which Jamie’s eyes glistened as they roamed over the well-filled board, there seemed no danger of his wanting an appetite for the good things piled thereon; and with great alacrity—first, however, hitching up his stockings, which usually hung loose about his heels—

he took his place assigned to him.

At the table at which the guests were now seated, the cloth was covered with a spotless white, and the laird was a great stickler for

cleanliness ; and if his table appointments lacked elegance, they were at least always clean. The drinking-vessels consisted of a mixture of mugs and glasses, heterogeneous in shape and size, the two turnkeys in waiting being deputed to replenish them with small-beer and ale, as required, the ci-devant brewer, who had dexterously exchanged glasses with Bailie Lothian, his own being the smaller of the two, keeping them pretty busily employed. The dishes and plates were all of pewter, polished to the highest degree of brilliancy by the turnkeys, who knew well with whom they had to deal, and were ever careful not to offend their fastidious but lavish paymaster, who moreover would take up his plate and examine it critically, and, in the event of his finding speck or spot upon it, would unceremoniously throw it at the head of the delinquent attendant with some such remark as, ‘Ye dirty devil ! I’ll teach ye no to put a filthy trencher before Kincraigie.’ On the present auspicious occasion, however,

the fastidious Kincaigie had nothing to complain of in that respect.

All the dishes had been set on the table at once ; but although the courses were not brought on successively and arranged conformably to the customs of genteel society, yet they were plentiful, well cooked, and varied.

‘Here’s flesh and fools a’ thegither on the table,’ exclaimed John Dhu, as he glanced with glistening eyes from the joints of meat to the poultry.

‘And a braw feast it is,’ responded Colonel Monro with great emphasis, as he sniffed up the steam ascending from two huge bowls of soup, cocky-leeky and hotch-potch, the latter representing the animal and almost the whole vegetable world stewed together.

Along with these soups there were put on the table, without any regard whatever to order, a round of boiled beef, a roast gigot of mutton, and a singed sheep’s head ; a boiled turkey, roast ducks, and green peas ; plump barn-door fowls, trenchers of

tripe, a large dish of minced collops, and, to crown all, that prince of puddings a huge haggis, which sent up such appetizing odours as caused the patriotic Scotchmen at the table to sniff up the air thus laden with the fumes of this their national and almost idolized dish.

‘Noo then, we mun just say grace afore we begin,’ said the laird, who was never forgetful of his religious duties, as he stood up and addressed Dr. Glen at the opposite end of the table. ‘And,’ he continued, ‘seeing that we have nae a minister here, and seeing that a doctor o’ the body comes neist to a doctor o’ the soul, I’ll just thank ye, sir, to say it for us ; but mind,’ he added, with a caution that was duly appreciated by all the company, ‘dinna mak’ a long prayer, else a’ the vivers will get cauld.’

The worthy doctor obeyed the laird to the letter, and intense was the enjoyment of the guests, and more gratified than ever were their olfactory nerves, when the master of the feast brandished his knife

and made a deep cut into the skin of the haggis ; and from it there immediately rushed forth into the spacious dish a mass of minced sheep's lungs, hearts, and livers, along with a savoury fluid, well seasoned with onions and condiments.

So busily engaged in doing justice to the good things on the table did every guest now become, that for a while scarcely any sounds were to be heard in the crowded apartment, save occasional grunts of pleasure and satisfaction from those who were not often used to be so daintily regaled, or calls for small-beer or ale by thirsty souls.

Pausing for a minute or two after having despatched a plateful of haggis, followed by another of minced collops, Captain Pillans, looking towards the laird, remarked with the air of a connoisseur, as he held up his goblet to a turnkey to be replenished for about the sixth time :

‘ This is unco guid ale, Kincraigie ; d’ye get it frae Archie Younger ? ’

‘ Ay,’ replied the laird ; ‘ and there’s nae better to be gotten in Auld Reekie.

But, Mr. Hog, ye dinna drink nor eat ; it fashes me to see it,' he added with an air of hospitable concern, as he turned to his new acquaintance. ' Let me gie ye a wee mair o' this haggis.'

' I assure you, sir, I am making a very good dinner,' replied Mr. Hog, who was in truth, however, too much engrossed with the strange company in which he found himself to pay much attention to the good things before him.

' Or permit me to send you a slice of this turkey,' called out Dr. Glen, addressing Mr. Hog ; ' I can recommend it most highly.'

' It's as braw a bubblyjock as I ever saw,' exclaimed Colonel Monro, in support of the doctor's recommendation.

' And allow me, sir, to prescribe some of this bread-poultice for your stomach along with it,' interposed that waggish young medical student, Sandy Monro, as he stirred up the dish of bread-sauce with a spoon.

' These here how-towdies are unco guid,'

observed the little barber, as he helped himself to nearly half of one of the barn-door hens; 'aiblins the gentleman wad tak' a wing o' ane; but I opine that ilka body sud help hissel' to the dish neist him.'

Mr. Hog, overwhelmed with these pressing invitations, and in order to escape from them, took a wing of a duck, or 'duke,' as his friend Bailie Lothian styled that bird when he helped him to it, observing at the same time, as he looked archly at the laird:

'I told my freen, Mr. Hog, he wad lose his appiteet. I assure you, Kincraigie, he has been rinnin' frae ane end o' the toon to tither in the het sun, speering after a house for a southern leddy freen o' his wha is minded to live in Edinbro.'

'Is she a single lady?' asked Dr. Glen, with a cunning twinkle in his eye, for Mr. Hog, a widower, was reputed in Edinburgh society to be in search of a second partner, if he could meet with a fortune.

'A widow, whilk is the same thing,'

replied the Bailie, with a look as cunning as that of his friend Dr. Glen.

Mr. Hog was about to reply somewhat testily to this jest of Bailie Lothian, which he did not altogether approve of, when the mirth was diverted into another channel, poor Jamie Duff furnishing the entertainment. This innocent, who lived with his widowed mother in the Cowgate, had ever been most kind and attentive to her, and so anxious for her comfort, that he would consume none of the edibles he collected from the charitable, in his daily peregrinations, till he had taken them home, and allowed her an opportunity of partaking of them. So rigid was he in his adherence to this laudable rule of carrying everything home, that he made no distinction between solids and fluids, but introduced all alike into his pocket.

On this grand occasion, anxious that his mother should enjoy a share of the savoury-smelling haggis, he, whilst the rest of the guests were busily plying their knives and forks, surreptitiously endeavoured to con-

vey the contents of his plate into his coat-pocket, whilst, with the cunning of a half-wit, he kept his eyes fixed upon the company, to watch if his movements should be noticed. Unfortunately for him, his attention was thus diverted from his work; his hand missed the mark, and a great part of the greasy haggis, instead of travelling into his own capacious pocket, travelled on to the brand-new buckskin breeches of the gentleman seated next him, one Captain Pitcairn, of the Old City Guard, a well-to-do clothier, who was, or affected to be, a great beau, and very nice about his dress.

‘Blood and thunder!’ shouted the enraged Captain, when he felt the warmth of the savoury fluid penetrate through his nether garment to his skin; ‘what the plague is this? You’ve spoilt my breeks, ye deevil!’ he continued, as he started from his chair and looked fiercely at Jamie. ‘Can ye no pit your haggis in your ain mou, ye ill-faur’d, gattling gowk?’

The rest of the company looked on the scene now being enacted with some astonishment; but the two waggish young disciples of *Æsculapius* evidently derived no little amusement from it, as the exasperated Captain began to abuse the poor daftie in no very measured terms, using expletives that may as well be left unrecorded; while the latter proved himself to be not at all behindhand in the wordy conflict, for though on ordinary occasions he could not speak distinctly, yet when excited or irritated he could make shift to swear lustily, roundly, and distinctly; so he now replied to Pitcairn's vituperations in terms equally opprobrious.

The harmony of the banquet was thus disturbed, but only momentarily; for the laird, now that all the guests had eaten to their satisfaction, gave the order for the table to be cleared, induced the Captain to drown his anger in a bumper of claret, and caused Jamie hurriedly to absent himself from the room for a while, by a false report of a funeral going down the West

Bow, insinuated into his ear by one of the turnkeys.

When the table-cloth had been removed, and the dishes replaced by jugs, mugs, bottles, and glasses, with the accompaniment of pipes and tobacco, the laird, looking round benignantly upon his guests, said, in a tone hovering between the joyful and the pathetic :

‘Aweel, my friends, this is like to be our last meeting in the auld tolbooth, but I hope we shall have mony a gathering in my new quarters. Ye all ken John Dhu,’ he added rather abruptly, ‘a guid and honest, ay, and as kind-hearted a man as ever lived, spite o’ his fierce looks—there’s no denying that ye hae fierce looks, John, and that your countenance frights folk as much as your Lochaber axe’—and here the laird looked smilingly on John Dhu ; ‘aweel, ’tis with his cousin, that’s Widow Gillespie, on Castle Hill, that I am gaun to lodge, and I’se warrant she’ll mak’ ye a’ welcome whene’er ye chance to drop in. What say you, John Dhu ?’

As John Dhu had very strong doubts on the subject, and opined that he could not guarantee the widow's welcome so confidently as the hospitable laird was doing, especially as regarded the uproarious and mirthful medical students on the one hand, and Jamie Duff and the blue-gown bedesman and the cow-feeder on the other, he discreetly kept silent, while Kincraigie proceeded to inaugurate the ceremony of drinking toasts with a short speech.

'We are all Tories here, I hope.'

'Ay, ay, we are, or ought to be,' responded the guests, laughing, some of them winking at each other, as they knew that this remark of the laird's was a preliminary, probably, to some not very flattering allusions to the powers that were.

'I'm a Tory to the backbone,' said the laird, striking the table emphatically with his fist, 'and a Scotchman, and I hate the Union and the excisemen ; but I'll gie ye a toast just now that I hope ye'll all drink. Fill your glasses to the rim ; a good Tory will drink mair than a dozen Whigs a'the-

gither. A Tory can drink a bumper to the health of every friend at his table, and to a' his friend's friends, nae matter how many. I hope I may not have to convict one out o' a' this company of Whiggery—that's to say, of shirking the glass.'

The company noisily expressed their acquiescence in this expression of hope by vigorous hurrahs and much striking of the table with their jugs and glasses.

'I wad first begin by toasting our new acquaintance at my right hand here. Mr. Roger Hog, I drink your good health,' said the laird, bowing with great politeness to that gentleman, 'and I drink the healths of all your family; and as I understand that you are a widower, I drink to all your best affections.'

Mr. Hog at once expressed his sense of the honour done him.

'And your lady friend, sir, we maun toast her,' continued the laird, 'after all the company had emptied their glasses and mugs. 'Gentlemen, fill another bumper. Puir mortals suld we be without the

chastening influence of lovely woman!’ and the laird spoke these last words in an exalted tone, for he was becoming elated from the potent effects of so much ale and claret. ‘But,’ he asked, looking at Mr. Hog, ‘what be the name o’ the fair widow?’

‘Mrs. Witham,’ replied Hog, laughing.

‘She’s not a Whig lady, is she?’ inquired the laird, as he paused with his glass in his hand and looked suspiciously at Mr. Hog.

‘Oh no,’ replied the latter promptly. ‘Squire Witham was one of the staunchest Jacobites in all Westmoreland; for he was a Roman Catholic, and I say the Roman Catholics are the staunchest Tories in the nation, for they are the avowed enemies of Presbyterianism.’

‘Aweel,’ replied the laird, ‘I am no Presbyterian mysel’; I am an Episcopalian,’ saying which, he toasted the widow with full honours, adding that he should be proud and pleased to know her.

‘The pleasure will be mutual, I feel sure,’ replied Mr. Hog, with great solemnity, ‘and I shall be charmed to introduce you to each other.’

‘Hoot, Mr. Hog, dinna cut your ain throat i’ that reckless fashion,’ shouted Dr. Glen from the other end of the table; ‘wad ye introduce to the leddy ane who is sae like to be a dangerous rival?’

‘He needna fear,’ exclaimed the laird, as soon as he could make his voice heard above the tumult of laughter which this speech had provoked; ‘though I reverence and esteem angelic woman, there is nae room in my heart for love; one feeling alane engrosses it. Noo then, I’ll gie ye a toast,’ he added, smiling. ‘Here’s to the King. Hech, sirs, that’s loyal; but wha is the King? ye a’ ken that as well as Kin-craigie.’

And here he tapped his nose playfully with his finger, wagging his head at the same time, and singing in a clear and not unmelodious voice a stave of a Jacobite song:

'Here's to the King, sir !
Ye ken wha I mean, sir ;
And to every honest man
That will do't again.
Fill, fill your bumpers high ;
Drain, drain your glasses dry ;
Out upon him, fie ! oh fie !
That winna do't again.'

The toast was received with thunders of applause, each man, however, attaching to it the meaning congenial to his own political opinions, and drinking to it accordingly, without giving expression to his sentiments. But Colonel Monro was not so reticent, for taking off his bonnet, and waving it so as conspicuously to display his white cockade, he called out in a loud voice :

'Ay, "out upon him, fie ! oh fie ! that winna do't again !" I did it in '15, and I did it in '45 ; and troth, I'll do't again, as sune as Royal Charlie comes back to us, and that he's sure to do afore lang : we mun but bide a wee yet.'

'Weel, weel, Colonel, bide a wee yet, and haud your tongue,' exclaimed the laird, who did not quite approve of so very

marked and energetic a display of political feeling before so numerous a company. Then turning to Mr. Hog, he added: 'Puir chiel, he's a wee bit saft; but we a' ken him here, and we never mind what he says or does.'

The guests were now becoming very uproarious under the influence of so many bumpers, everyone drinking the health of his neighbour, and of his neighbour's wife, children, brothers, sisters, and even cousins, to the second and third degree, as was then the prevalent custom. Dr. Glen, Captain Pillans, and the young medical gentlemen vied with each other in the rapidity with which they tossed off their overflowing goblets; while the little barber, who was always smitten with religious fervour when stimulated by drink, cried out, as he held up his mug:

'Confusion to the Pope and the Pretender!'

Before any reply could be made to this toast, the laird started up, exclaiming:

'Tut, tut, man! sit you doon. You are

fu' ; gie us nae mair o' your havers. However, I mun say that I have nae objection to drink confusion to the Pretender ; but,' he added, nodding his head significantly, ' I ken weel wha the Pretender is—and I suppose it's no high treason to say that much.' Here the laird drank off his glass. ' But as for the Pope,' he continued, ' I have naething to do wi' him, guid gentlemen, for I think he's no likely to come frae Rome to fash us in Scotland, though, aiblins, I would rather see him here than the butcher Duke. No, no ; we munna have the butcher in Scotland again—and it's no high treason to say that either.'

Rebuked by this speech of the laird, but not silenced, the religious barber next tried to give vent to his feelings by commencing to give out a hymn ; but his voice was quickly drowned in the laird's stentorian tones, as he sang a stave of a Jacobite ballad :

' Auld Scotland, thou'rt owre cauld a hole
For nursing siccan vermin ;
But the very dogs in England's Court,
They bark and howl in German.'

‘Huzza ! Confusion to the Union ! The deil tak’ a’ Whigs, excisemen, and foreigners !’ vociferated the Colonel, leaning over the table and upsetting the barber’s mug, who looked with an imbecile smile as the claret flowed out of it into his lap.

‘Gie us another stave, Kincraigie ; something about that heroic commander his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland and the battle of Val,’ suggested young Home, putting his tongue in his cheek as he spoke.

‘Up and rin awa’, Willie,’

muttered the laird, with a derisive smile ; then rising somewhat unsteadily to his feet, he sang in his loudest key :

‘To Hanover I pray begone,
Your daddy’s dirty sta’, Willie ;
And look on that as your ain hame,
And come na here at a’, Willie.’

‘Na, na ; come no here, Willie, but gang to Hanover wi’ your daddy ; he’s there often eneuch ; and bide there,’ cried out the blue-gowned Colonel.

‘Hech, sirs, that was well sung,’ interposed Dr. Glen, who had joined in the stave, though in a highly discordant key, ‘wi’ the help o’ my accompaniment, though, I maun observe,’ he added with a consequential air.

‘Haud your noise, Glen. Dr. Glen, ye hae nae mair voice than an auld wife o’ eighty,’ exclaimed the laird disdainfully. ‘Noo then, I’ll mak’ ye the real Scotch beverage,’ he added, as a turnkey presented him with a large jug half full of boiling water. ‘I’ll fill this up wi’ raal Glenleevat, and sweeten it wi’ sugar, and we’ll drink our last toasts in toddy.’

The laird, having brewed the toddy, called upon Mr. Hog for a song, and that gentleman being now infected with the general hilarity and noisy convivial feeling, at once complied with his host’s request, adapting, as he considered, his song to the occasion :

‘To drink is a Christian’s diversion
Unknown to the Turk or the Persian ;
Let Mahometan fools
Live by heathenish rules,

But let British lads sing
Crown a health to the King,
And a fig for your Sultan and Sophy.'

'Thank 'ye, Mr. Hog,' said the laird.
'And noo, I'll first propose a toast that ye
may all drink wi' pleasure and satisfaction,
seeing that 'tis to the health of a braw
Scotch gentleman and a gallant soldier.
Here's to Lord George Murray, wha com-
manded the right wing o' ane o' the armies
—I dinna say which—at Culloden.' The
laird's blue eye lighted up with enthu-
siasm as he spoke, and the smouldering
fires of the past leapt into a flame, and
again the gallant Highlander seemed to
hear the wild notes of the bagpipes, and
the terrible war-cry, 'Claymore!' and the
clash of steel on the moor of Culloden.
'We maun drink to Lord George Murray.
There's nae treason in that toast,' he went
on to say, recovering his usual composure ;
'and here's to the loyal clans, too, that
composed that wing—the Athol men, the
Robertsons, the Stewarts, the Camerons,
and the Frazers.'

The toast was drunk by all present with enthusiasm.

The laird now paused a few moments ; a change had come over his countenance, and all its brightness and gaiety seemed gone. He sat gazing into vacancy, and apparently buried in thought ; then suddenly rising, whilst the look of grave melancholy on his face deepened, he said :

‘Gentlemen, before we separate, let us commemorate departed friends ; so I hope you’ll all fill bumpers, for whether they died on the field of battle or on the scaffold, I ken weel they died for auld Scotland. The Duke o’ Perth,’ he added in a louder tone, ‘Lord Strathallan, Lord Nairn, Appin Stewart, and Keppoch, and a’ wha hae shed their bluid and given their lives. Nor will we forget anither, the last o’ the martyrs, a powerful chieftain—Simon, Lord Lovat, I mean. They micht hae spared an old man, nigh upon eighty years ; sure he could hae done them no muckle hurt. But thae Germans and foreigners—I name nae names—hae always thrustured for British

bluid—so he was doomed to dee. Puir auld nobleman ! he hadna lived a guid life when he was young, but he made amends by deeing a guid, and I may say a noble death—a death worthy of an ancient Roman. Puir auld nobleman ! as he laid his heed upon the block, he cried out, in the beautiful words of Horace, “ *Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.* ” Yes, gentlemen, it is sweet and glorious to dee for your country—and for our King too, I may add. I ken, gentlemen, ye’ll excuse my detaining ye a wee bit langer.’

To this there was a general reply of ‘Speak on ; speak on.’

‘There’s yet anither——’ here the laird paused abruptly, his voice seeming to fail, and he put his hand to his throat, as though he would press back the sob that had choked his utterance ; ‘ane mair,’ he resumed, conquering his emotion with a strong effort—‘ane that was as dear to me, gentlemen, as though he had been my ain brither ; he was young and gallant, handsome and brave : search a’ the Heelans

through, and ye wad hardly find his equal.
Would to heaven that I had deed with
him, for my King and my country! Even
as David mourned for Jonathan, I mourned
for him, the brither of my soul—Colonel
Charles Frazer !



CHAPTER XI.

CHARLIE MACDONALD.

THE Widow Gillespie occupied a flat, or the first floor in a land, as the entire house was, and still is, called in Edinburgh, on the Castle Hill. This land was very picturesquely situated, and the Laird of Kincraigie had good reason to congratulate himself on his change of quarters ; and to judge by the pleased expression on his face as he sat at a window of his apartments commanding a view of the Castle, he appeared to be in a very pleasant frame of mind.

It was a sultry afternoon, and the sun was obscured by clouds which seemed to threaten a thunderstorm—indeed, a few

large drops of rain had already fallen on the white dusty road leading to the palisades and gate of the great fortress, and a slight but refreshing breeze stirred the parched leaves of the limes shadowing the turf-covered base of the precipitous and almost perpendicular hill.

Rising in bold and defiant grandeur from the huge and lofty mass of blue whinstone rock on which it is built, the Castle stood strongly marked out against the sky, where a lurid light edged the piled-up masses of thundercloud. Under that darkening sky the grand old fortress looked grim and threatening enough, the strong palisades forming its barrier, the deep ditch, withdraw-bridge and gate, defended on the flanks by batteries, and, high above, the great semicircular half-moon battery, mounted with heavy guns, all buried in dark shadows, which intensified their sombre appearance.

In pleasing contrast, however, to this huge edifice and its grey hues, there lay stretched out towards the north, not the

assemblage of streets, squares, and crescents of the New Town of to-day, but a delightful verdant valley, with the little river, Water of Leith, running through the middle of it into the harbour of Leith, whilst the waves of the broad Firth of Forth, on which that seaport stands, glistened in the sunlight, which had flashed through an opening in the clouds; and, farther on, the distant shores of Fife, with its little fishing hamlets scattered along the margin of the sea, were lit up with that dazzling radiance, more dazzling by contrast with the dark shadows brooding over the old city. From his window, if he looked to the south, the laird could see the hills of Braid, and Craiglochart, and the rocky Pentlands. These reminded him somewhat of the mountains that reared their lofty, fantastic summits in his beloved Highland home; so when he heard a light step enter his room, concluding that it was Mrs. Gillespie, and without turning his head to look, he said:

‘The sight o’ thae hills is pleasant to my

e'en ; but eh, madam, 'tis lang sin' my feet pressed the heather, and I wad I could smell its sweet scent ance again.'

Kincraigie sighed as he uttered the last few words, and his sigh was echoed, but not by Widow Gillespie ; and as he turned abruptly round, he found himself confronted by a handsome, intelligent-looking, sharp little lad, apparently about eleven or twelve years of age. There was nothing, certainly, in the fair young face with its broad open brow, over which the bright auburn hair clustered like rings of red gold, to cause uneasiness or mistrust, and the dark blue eyes had an honest, truthful expression in them, that went straight to the heart ; still, the laird pushed his chair back, his florid cheek grew a shade paler, and his voice faltered as he said :

' Who art thou, laddie ?'

' Charlie Macdonald,' replied the boy, gazing in surprise at his interlocutor, who, with a troubled air, passed his hand over his brow, and looking earnestly at the

child, exclaimed in a voice which faltered from strong emotion :

‘That sudna be thy name, bairn, wi’ that face and those e’en, that bring back auld memories thronging thick and fast upon me. Thy very voice hath a particular ring in’t. ’Tis strange, unco strange,’ he murmured, as, stretching out his hand, he drew the little boy towards him. Then noticing some evidence of fear on the part of the latter, he said in his usual kind cheery tone, ‘We maun be friends, Charlie, for I hae taken a liking to thee.’

‘Oh, sir,’ replied the boy, reassured by the kindness of the laird’s manner, ‘I shall be very glad to please you in any way. I live here with Mrs. Gillespie—she is my cousin ; and I just came to tell you that if ever you wanted anyone to take any message for you or anything of that kind, I would run directly when I came home from school.’

‘Verra weel, Charlie ; I dare say I shall make use of you sometimes, and ye maun come and see me every day. But, Charlie,

you don't speak English like the Edinbro people and the Lowlanders. Have you always lived here ?

The laird had been struck by hearing the boy pronounce English so much more correctly than it was spoken in the Lowlands, or by those who, like himself, came from that part of the Highlands more immediately contiguous to the Lowlands.

'Oh no,' replied the boy, with a sigh. 'I have only been here about a year. My grandfather sent me here to learn Latin and Greek at the High School. My grandfather taught me English. We live in the Highlands, and our home is in Inverness. Mrs. Gillespie is very kind, but I often wish I were at home again ; there are no high mountains here, no lakes, nothing half so beautiful as the Highlands.'

'Why, Charlie, just when you came in, I was e'en thinking mysel', wi' a sorrowfu' heart, of my own home at Kincraigie ; aweel, laddie, we maun entertain each

other wi' our recollections, though mine are sad ones enow.'

'Do you know my cousin, John Dhu, at the Guard House?' asked the boy, who seemed already slipping into happy familiarity with the laird. 'He comes from the Highlands too, and we often talk together about Inverness. John is so kind.'

'Yes, I ken John Dhu,' replied the laird, with a smile; 'he is an unco guid fellow, though he hath a ferocious look that affrights some folk. I hae been shut up a guid spell o' time in the Tolbooth, and I became acquaint wi' your cousin there.'

'Wasn't you tired, sir, of being so long in prison?' asked the child, with a look of tender pity and commiseration.

'Aweel, Charlie, I think I had gotten used to it, and then I was suffering for a very guid cause. But,' added the laird, with a sigh, 'my fate was better than that o' many o' my freends—brave loyal gentlemen, wha hae shed their bluid on the scaffold for their rightful Prince. I hae

sometimes envied 'em, Charlie, and wish I had been i' their place.'

The boy opened his big blue eyes rather wide at this last declaration, which evidently he did not coincide in; then he said, with a grave look :

'They used to have executions in old times on Castle Hill, lots of 'em; and witches were burnt, too. I wouldn't have liked to have lived here then; would you, sir? Oh, what a dreadful flash of lightning that was!' added the boy, drawing back from the window, against which he had been leaning; 'and the rain is coming down in torrents. Look, Mr. Hog is just crossing the road in a great hurry, and I believe he is coming here for shelter.'

Charlie's surmise proved correct, for in a few moments Mr. Hog presented himself in the laird's apartment, panting and almost breathless from the speed with which he had walked to escape the storm, and the exertion of mounting the winding turnpike stairs that led to the different flats of the house in which the laird lived, an

exertion not a little disagreeable to a person having a tendency to obesity.

‘Sit doon, sir. I hope you are weel, Newliston,’ said the laird, with a genial smile, addressing Mr. Hog by the name of his estate, in conformity with Scottish custom, which he knew would be as pleasing to the *ci-devant* London merchant as it was to the owners of ancestral acres.

Mr. Hog accordingly seated himself, at the same time gasping out a few words about the storm, by way of apology for any intrusion he might have been guilty of, when, after having somewhat recovered his breath, he proceeded to say :

‘I say, sir, there isn’t a more thankless or laborious office than that of looking for a house for a friend ;’ and here Mr. Hog commenced wiping the perspiration off his face with his handkerchief. ‘I only hope Mrs. Witham will be satisfied, that’s all ; but ten to one she’ll be dissatisfied. Ladies are hard to please. However, I say, sir, I’ll never undertake such a task again. I’ve walked the flesh off my bones,’

he added pettishly, 'going first down one steep close and up another, and looking first at this place and then at that.'

'Aweel, Newliston, you can afford to lose a little flesh,' said the laird, with a chuckle. 'Ye are nae sae ill off for that commodity. But where is the house ye have taen for the leddy?'

'I have taken a flat for her in one of the new houses in James's Court,' replied Mr. Hog.

'Does the Southern leddy ken what a flat is?' asked the laird.

'She has gathered some idea of it from friends who have been in Edinburgh,' replied Mr. Hog; 'and she thought that she would like to live in one, especially if genteel families should be occupying the adjoining flats. Well, I told her she need have no fears on that score; for you know, sir, that all our nobility and gentry live in them. But I say, sir,' continued Mr. Hog with a smile, 'I have some little doubts how she will be pleased when she finds out that our poor folk live in the topmost flats,

and that she may come in contact with them every day on the common staircase.'

'Aweel,' remarked the laird, 'if she is a sensible leddy, as a' Jacobite leddies are, she'll accommodate herself to circumstances, just as our own quality do. Ye ken the poor must live somewhere. However James's Court is a braw place, and you hae dune weel for your friend.'

'I saw a handsomely furnished flat in a large land in Advocate's Close, which you know is a very fashionable place.'

'Tut, tut!' exclaimed the laird testily; 'surely, sir, ye wadna let a leddy who is come of a loyal stock, as ye tell me she is, hae for a neighbour the grandson of that auld Whig body Sir James Stewart! Nae, nae; it wadna do to send Mistress Witham into Jamie Wylie's* Close.'

Mr. Hog looked amused at the energy

* A sobriquet which the Jacobites gave to Sir James Stewart, the Lord Advocate, who was a strenuous supporter of the Prince of Orange and the Revolution. Wilson's 'Memorials of Old Edinburgh,' vol. ii., p. 9.

with which the laird expressed his dislike of that staunch supporter of William III., and nodding his head good-humouredly, proceeded with the account of his search for a house.

‘Or I might have had a flat with fine spacious rooms in Warriston Close, or the choice of two in Borthwick Close, near the Assembly Rooms ; and as Mrs. Witham is rather a fashionable lady, she would most likely wish to see the company who go there. One of these flats would have been very convenient for her in that case ; but I say I was afraid that it would not suit her English tastes to live in our dark, narrow closes or wynds, so I decided against them.’

And Mr. Hog had decided prudently, for although the narrow, steep, nay, almost precipitous closes and wynds, diverging from each side of the High Street, were, at the time of our story, the retreats of the aristocracy of Scotland, the gay little English lady would assuredly have taken exception to their gloom and obscurity, and protested

that the light of heaven could never find access there. Yet the lofty houses in these narrow thoroughfares were once indeed stately mansions, and even at this day they exhibit substantial traces of their former grandeur, seen through the poverty, squalor, and dirt with which they are filled. Many of these mansions were built with polished ashlar fronts, and have sculptured doorways, surmounted by inscriptions and armorial bearings, high, steep gables, with corbie steps—an ornament so common to old houses in Edinburgh—towering aloft, almost beyond the point of sight; whilst mingled with these stone tenements, others, of an older date, timber-fronted, jut out here and there, giving variety by their irregular architecture, their different stories, one overhanging the other, their long rows of mullioned windows, and their dormer lights of an ornate character, which rise into their roofs and almost obliterate the narrow strip of sky just visible from below. Such, in the last century, were the aristo-

cratic mansions of Auld Reekie in times long gone by.*

‘And when does your Southern leddy friend come?’ inquired the laird.

‘To-morrow,’ replied Mr. Hog, ‘and she will bring with her all her family—three girls and a boy; and, by my faith,’ continued that gentleman, shaking his head, ‘for a mischievous, saucy young jackanapes, if you search all Edinburgh through, you would scarce find a match for Tony Witham.’

* Although the authoress has herself visited most of the wynds and closes of the Old Town, she must acknowledge the assistance Mr. Daniel Wilson’s splendid work, ‘*Memorials of Old Edinburgh*,’ has afforded her.



CHAPTER XII.

HIS DEAREST WISH.

IN a handsomely furnished apartment of a flat on the first-floor of one of the then newly erected houses in James's Court sat Mrs. Witham, engaged in conversation with two gentlemen—the Lairds of Kin-craigie and Newliston.

From the windows of the room might be seen the North Loch and gardens, pleasantly laid out and decorated with summer-houses, sloping down from the closes and wynds to its margin ; while in the distance lay extended a fine open fertile tract of country, diversified only with a solitary farm-house or cottage here and there and

with woodland and moor, and whose boundary was the broad Firth of Forth.

The ceremony of introduction having been gone through, and the laird duly presented by Mr. Hog to Mrs. Witham, the three chatted for a little while pleasantly together, first on the weather—as was then the custom, just as it is now—and then on various other trifling topics ; the English lady, however, spite of the instructions she had received from her old friend, tripping, only now and then, in addressing the laird as ‘Mr. Robertson,’ and even as ‘Mr. Kinraigie,’ a mistake she generally corrected very gracefully, and evidently to the amusement of Kinraigie himself.

But when she heard the laird address her old friend by the title of his estate, she fluttered her fan, and, laughing, exclaimed :


‘Oh, la ! Mr. Hog—no, no, I vow and protest I can never call you Newliston. I have known you as Mr. Hog for ever so long—I don’t know how long.’

‘Pray do not attempt to do it, my dear madam,’ replied that gentleman, in an assumed grave tone. ‘I have always been Hog with you and your father before you; and if I were to desire to give you the trouble of calling me by any other name now, I am afraid that, behind my back at least, you would call me a great bore.’

Mr. Hog laughed heartily at his own little attempt at wit, and the laird and Mrs. Witham complaisantly joined in the laugh.

This was Kincairgie’s first visit to Mrs. Witham, and they seemed to be mutually pleased with each other; for the laird uttered compliments which might be deemed very high-flown, and the fair widow received them most graciously. And moreover, she was quite prepared to admire Prince Charlie and condemn the ruling power—sentiments which raised her high in the estimation of the laird.

‘Yes, I came to Edinburgh quite prepared to like it; but I must say further that I am positively in love with it,’ said



Mrs. Witham, bestowing one of her sweetest smiles on Kincraigie.

‘Happy city!’ exclaimed the latter, placing his hand over his heart, and sighing; ‘but thrice happy wad be the man who could hear from your lips so blissful an assurance gin it applied to himself.’

‘O Lord, sir, how mighty prettily you talk! I did not think you Scotch gentlemen were so given to flattery!’ said the little widow, fluttering her fan.

‘Od zooks, I say, there are fools everywhere!’ interposed Mr. Hog, in his gruffest tone.

‘Fie upon you, you rude man!’ exclaimed Mrs. Witham, shaking her finger at the delinquent; ‘what will the Laird of Kincraigie think of you?’

‘I ken him weel, ma’am,’ replied the Laird of Kincraigie, casting a look of reproach upon his friend as he spoke; ‘he is a man of verra little sentiment.’

Mr. Hog laughed contemptuously.

‘I say sentiment is buried when the days of courtship are over, Mrs. Witham; you

and I are old married folk, each with a family on hand ; and I say we have got enough to do to bring 'em up soberly and steadily, without fashing our heads with other matters.'

'You profane auld sinner!' exclaimed the laird, laughing ; 'wad ye dare apply the epithet auld to a leddy who is in the fu' spring-tide o' her youth and beauty ! Hoot, fie upon ye, sir ! For myself,' continued the laird, assuming all at once a very solemn tone, 'I have a mission—a verra grave and important end to accomplish and work oot, and I maun lose no time, for I hae been owertardy already about it. Were it no for this imperative duty, and gin I were free and unshackled to do as I like, I vow and protest'—and here the laird laid his hand on his heart and bowed low to Mrs. Witham—'I wad enter the lists and contend for the beautiful prize mysel'—though, alas !' and here he sighed deeply, 'with sma' hope of success.'

Mr. Hog looked on, struck with no little

surprise—not perhaps so much at the laird's high-flown compliments to the fair widow, as at the grave allusion he made to the mission he had to perform. Endeavouring to fathom what possibly could be his friend's meaning, the latter, as if he had divined his thoughts, said, after a pause of a few seconds :

‘ I hae a grave matter to consult you on, Newliston—an affair no meet to be discussed before a leddy, whose tender susceptibilities, I wis weel, wad be frightened and feared wi’ the least hint of ’t. But ’twill bide till anither time,’ he added mysteriously—‘ ’twill bide till the night.’

Marvelling much what this important communication would turn out to be, Mr. Hog sat listening, in amused but somewhat contemptuous silence, to some further commonplace conversation between Mrs. Witham and her new acquaintance, which he at length abruptly broke into, by inquiring where Tony was.


‘ He has gone to Leith. Poor lad ! he was so anxious to try his new fishing-rod,

that I could not refuse to let him go. Lady Archer's boys have gone with him ; one of them is in the same class that he will be in at the High School.'

'I say, if you let Tony run about with those young Archers,' remarked Mr. Hog, shrugging his shoulders, 'he will break his neck or do himself some harm. Those Archers are wild lads, and you know Tony is never out of mischief.'

'La, sir, how you frighten me!' exclaimed Mrs. Witham, turning pale with alarm, for she was, though a rather silly little lady, a really fond mother, and her apprehensions once roused could not be easily allayed. 'I vow and protest, Mr. Hog, you said that Lady Archer was a charming lady, and everything that is genteel and polite, when you introduced me to her.'

'I say so she is ; but what has that to do with Tony?' growled Mr. Hog, who opened his eyes wide, as well he might, at this far-fetched allusion to the introduction, for he plainly perceived that the anxious mother intended thereby, in some



indirect manner, to blame him as the cause of her present alarm and uneasiness; a most satisfactory mode, to her at least, of working out the problem she had mentally proposed to herself for solution—namely, that but for that introduction, poor Tony would not have been out with Lady Archer's sons that afternoon, and so would not have run the risk of breaking his neck, or doing himself some other hurt.

Mrs. Witham sat silent for a few moments, when Mr. Hog, somewhat irritated at this unexpected result of his well-meant warning against letting young Master Tony have the liberty of running wild in the streets, at last rose rather abruptly from his chair to take his leave, and Kincraigie, after having tried to reassure the anxious mother that her boy would suffer no harm, rose also, and made his adieux in a most ceremonious and polite manner, lavishing his most graceful bows on the afflicted, yet admiring little widow.

So soon as the two gentlemen had got

down into the court, the laird linked his arm through his friend's, and pressed him to accompany him to his lodging ; for he should now, he said in a very serious tone of voice, take him into his confidence, and in doing which, would rely upon his friendship to aid him to accomplish the end he had in view, and thus relieve him from the terrible anxiety which now weighed him down.

Mr. Hog looked puzzled and felt astonished, but not knowing what reply to make, kept silence.

The laird also spake never a word, but strode rapidly forwards, almost dragging his companion with him. Breathless as he was from the quickness of their walk, Mr. Hog, nevertheless, busied himself in forming all sorts of conjectures as to what could possibly be that grave and important end in the accomplishment of which he had been so earnestly asked by his friend to aid him. The first reflections of Mr. Hog were decidedly mercenary, and took a pecuniary view of the case ; but on

further reflection he comforted himself and dismissed his anxiety on that point, as he remembered that when the laird mentioned this important end at Mrs. Witham's, he spoke of it as a mission, and an intending borrower does not usually intimate his wish in those terms. Then the thought struck the perturbed gentleman, Was the laird enamoured of his fair friend, and did he wish to make him his confidant, and even to ask him to negotiate a marriage? Alarming thought! what should he say to the laird? How put him off? What should he do? for certainly he could not allow a friend, a lady towards whom he almost stood in the position of a guardian, to wed herself with a gentleman who, to say the very least, was decidedly flighty.

Such were the thoughts that agitated Mr. Hog, when he and his companion arrived in front of the lodging of the latter at the Castle Hill.

Here Kincaigie paused for a few moments, looked around him, and then,

breaking his long silence, said with solemn significance :

‘Twas the sight of this spot that first reminded me of the duty I hae so lang neglected, and day by day the duty becomes more imperative.’

‘I say, sir, I am not very clever at guessing riddles,’ replied Mr. Hog, with a grunt, as he followed his friend under the handsomely carved doorway of the stately old land they were entering, and began to mount the outside narrow turret-stair leading to the different flats. Step by step they ascended in silence, until they entered the laird’s room, the window of which, as we have said, commanded a view of the Castle and the esplanade in front of it.

‘Nay, sit down, Newliston. I’ll no plague you wi’ riddles noo, sir. Ye ken weel, I warrant, that yonner place,’ and Kincraigie indicated with his forefinger the open space in front of the castle, ‘is where men convicted o’ high treason are executed.’

The more Mr. Hog had been teasing

himself with unpleasant guesses and conjectures as to what might be the nature of the laird's communication to him, the more he felt provoked at what he deemed so trivial an observation ; and accordingly he asked very curtly :

‘My dear sir, is that all you have brought me here to tell me? I say all Edinbro knows that.’

‘You are unco impatient, my dear sir,’ replied the laird, in his turn somewhat irritated ; ‘but I assure you this is no a matter to be lightly dismissed, and I maun beg o’ you to listen attentively while I tell you a’ the circumstances, frae beginning to end.’

‘Then I say, sir, pray begin at once, and I will give you my best attention,’ replied Mr. Hog ; while he added, though in a lower tone, ‘or we shall never come to the end.’

Making no direct reply to this last remark, which perhaps he did not hear, the laird said in a tragic tone :

‘Did ye not a’ think that when ye had

gotten me out o' the Tolbooth a' my troubles were at an end ? but I tell ye, sir, ye were a' wrang.'

Mr. Hog stared in amazement, and asked himself what possible cause for care or anxiety his friend could now have. His future, as he and all the laird's friends thought, had been carefully provided for by his relatives. No sooner had he been ejected from gaol on account of his infirmity, than they had pounced upon him, and cognosced him, as the Scotch lawyers say, in the usual manner, his younger brother being appointed his curator or guardian. By this prudent measure his property was preserved against any attempts which might be made by designing persons, and an adequate yearly allowance was provided for his support. A moderate income having, in this way, been secured to the laird, it was thought that he would be enabled to maintain the character of a deranged gentleman with some degree of respectability, and enjoy henceforth a total immunity from all the cares of life. And

yet here was he, in these early days, talking of trouble.

Mr. Hog again began to puzzle his brains, thinking what could cause Kincraigie's present anxiety; and again came pecuniary questions into his head, and with them the conviction that some of the laird's Tolbooth acquaintances might have been borrowing of him, and that he was wishful to anticipate his allowance by borrowing, in his turn, from his good friend Newliston, and hence the reason why he, Newliston, had been inveigled by the laird to his apartments.

This was a most distressing thought to occur to the mind of a man who loved money so dearly that he could scarce ever be induced to part with it on any occasion whatever. He became confirmed in his painful surmise when Kincraigie, confronting him, said in an almost coaxing tone:


'Newliston, wad ye win the character o' a most benevolent man?'

'What do ye want me to do, my dear sir?' replied the latter cautiously, thrust-

ing, as he spoke, his hands to the bottom of his breeches-pockets, and clutching the coin therein contained, whilst making the mental resolve that if he could earn the character of a benevolent man without expending any siller, he would ; but if the pursuit of this virtue were to cost a bodle, others might try for it, but he would not.

‘To render me a great service,’ replied the laird eagerly, ‘for the whilk I’ll be bound to ye for the rest o’ my days, be they lang or short ; and gin ye are a true friend sich as I expect you to be, you’ll strive wi’ might and main to bring about the happy consummation that shall shorten ‘em in this land o’ the leevin.’

Mr. Hog slowly withdrew his hand from his breeches-pockets, and stared at the laird in blank amazement. Here was an extraordinary proposition, that he, a man who bore malice or ill-will to no one, should help to shorten his friend’s days ! Before Mr. Hog could make any reply, however, Kincraigie laid his hand, in a somewhat peremptory fashion, on his arm, and said



with sparkling eyes and some vehemence of manner :

‘Come and look out o’ the window, Newliston—I wad have you consider the spot weel—whilst I confide to you how it was the first promptings of duty made themselves felt.’

‘I say, Kincraigie, I’ll not look out,’ replied Mr. Hog doggedly, though with sundry flutterings of his heart. In fact, a new fear had taken possession of him, and in his friend’s sparkling eyes he thought he detected the glare of suddenly awakened and dangerous insanity. Thus he contemplated with horror this invitation to look out of the window, as he fancied that Kincraigie, impelled by an access of irresistible homicidal mania, intended to throw him out headlong and fracture his skull.

‘Aweel, then ye maun just bide where you are,’ replied the laird, with a return of his old simple, kindly manner, which relieved Mr. Hog of some of his fears, to be, however, again immediately excited

with redoubled force, as the laird, assuming a very solemn air, proceeded to say in slow, deliberate, and sonorous tones :

‘ It came like a voice from the Castle Hill yonner,’ and here he pointed to the esplanade in front of the Castle, ‘ that said to me, “’Tis lang sin’ your quarters sud hae been exposed on the city gates, and your head on a spike ower the gateway of the Tolbooth. Be up and doing, faint heart ; and sin’ ye canna aid your lawfu’ Prince by fechtin’ to restore him to the throne o’ his fathers, you may at least dee for him.” Nicht and day those words ring in my ears,’ added the laird, with increasing enthusiasm. ‘ I hae noo but one object in life, Newliston—that is to shed my blood for my exiled Prince. Welcome wad be to my e’en the sicht o’ the sledge that sud drag me to the Castle Hill below. Ah, my friend, when I look on that place day after day, and ca’ to mind the many gallant gentlemen wha hae dee’d there for their rightfu’ King by the hands o’ the public executioner, the strong desire overcomes me

to dee mysel' in the same way for the cause o' my exiled Prince. Yes ; it is my duty ; and welcome wad be the sledge, the gibbet, and the fire that sud consume my heart and my bowels. And noo, Newliston, that I have tauld ye what is the *dearest wish o' my heart*, ye maun advise wi' me, and help me to carry it out.'

Mr. Hog listened gravely to the laird until he had done speaking, and it was only the fear of exciting the anger of a man unmistakably mad, on one point at least, that prevented Mr. Hog giving way to a sudden burst of laughter at this extraordinary delusion, which had evidently taken firm hold of his friend's mind ; but restraining his feelings with some difficulty, and reflecting that it might be better to humour, in some degree, the laird's delusion, he said in a grave tone :


' This is a most serious matter, and will require much deliberation, my dear Kin-craigie ; but before proceeding further in it, I must observe, that putting aside the friendship I bear you, which would as-

suredly prevent my making any attempt to bring you to the gallows—and supposing I were inclined to do you what I must consider so cruel and evil a turn, how should I set about it ?

‘ I carena how ye set about it, but I maun be hanged, drawn, and quartered. I’s e hae nae peace till it’s dune,’ vociferated the laird, in so loud and angry a key, as once more to awaken the terror of his visitor, who, assuming a perplexed air, said :

‘ Let me consider for a few moments, Kincraigie.’ Then pondering for a short time, he tapped his forehead with his forefinger, and at last exclaimed abruptly :

‘ I have it! We’ll go and call on young Colquhoun Grant, the writer; he has done some law business for me, and I say he is a very clever lawyer, though he has only lately begun to practise; he may suggest something that may further the end you wish to accomplish. I dare say you know him, for he was out, as well as yourself, in ’45.’



‘To be sure ; let us gang to him at ance. I ken him weel, but I didna ken he was here,’ replied the laird, in great delight. ‘Gie me your hand, Newliston ; I was sure ye wad help me in some way. And when ’tis ower, ye maun come, noos and thens, and luk at your auld freend’s head when it’s stickit up ower the Tolbooth-gate, and gie a kindly thocht to his memory.’

‘I say, I’ll not promise you that,’ replied Mr. Hog, as they left the room together, the latter not unwilling to escape being longer alone with his friend, whilst he was in the first throes of his new and strange delusion.



CHAPTER XIII.

COLQUHOUN GRANT, W.S.

AT the time of our story, the wide thoroughfare immediately below the Castle Hill used to be covered with the stalls and booths of the 'Lawn merchants,' on which they displayed their webs and cloths of every description, giving that central locality all the appearance of a fair, and thus it had come, not inappropriately, to be styled the 'Lawn Market.'

The old market-place was thronged with buyers and sellers as Kincraigie and Mr. Hog made their way through it, passing under the shadow of the clumsy and irregular building known as Weigh House, or Butter-trone, and pushing through the

crowd, till they reached that part of the Lawn Market where stood Gavinlock's Land. Here, mounting some half-dozen flights of steps, they came to the chambers of Mr. Colquhoun Grant, Writer to the Signet.

The writer received the two gentlemen with much cordiality, for Mr. Hog was known to him as a client, and with the laird he had been acquainted in the recent rising of '45 ; for in truth, Colquhoun Grant had been out himself, but the two brethren in arms had never met since, prudential reasons, both on the laird's account and his own, having prevented him visiting his former friend when incarcerated in the old Tolbooth.

The family of Colquhoun Grant had ever been devotedly attached to the ancient line of Scottish kings ; and when, acting under the influence of these feelings, he joined Prince Charles Edward's army, then on its march to the Lowlands, he was a very young man, having but just completed his studies for the law.

One of the first exploits of the gallant young Jacobite was performed when the army of the Prince lay before Edinburgh. Having been selected to form one of the party who were to be detached to force an entrance into the city, and that object having been cleverly effected, he alone had pursued some of the guards to the very walls of the Castle, where they had just time to close the outer gate against him, so close was he upon their heels ; but he struck his dirk into it, leaving the weapon there as a mark of triumph and defiance.

At Prestonpans, and at Falkirk, Colquhoun Grant had shown the most unflinching bravery, and had remained with the Prince till the cause of the Stuarts was lost for ever on the bloody field of Culloden.

After that, Colquhoun Grant had his own share of adventures and hair-breadth escapes, whilst skulking and lurking amongst his native hills ; but when at last the Government were satiated with blood,

and had relaxed their hunt after the unfortunate Jacobites, and all danger had happily passed away, he repaired to Edinburgh, where he commenced practising as a Writer to the Signet. Although still young in his profession, indeed little more than a beginner, he was already laying the foundation of that very considerable fortune which he afterwards amassed, so much was he esteemed, not by the Jacobites only, but by those of the opposite party also.

This was now the first time that Colquhoun Grant had met Kincaigie since they had served together in the Prince's army, and hearty and sincere were now their greetings, and many the mutual inquiries put and replied to.

Meanwhile, as Mr. Hog was striving to recover his breath after mounting the six flights of stairs, the Writer to the Signet and the Laird of Kincaigie talked of Prestonpans, of the ball at Holyrood House, and the march through the northern counties of England.

‘Mr. Grant was one of the Prince’s

Life Guards,' said the laird, addressing Mr. Hog; 'and a handsome callant you was then,' he added, again turning to his Jacobite friend, 'winning the hearts o' a' the lasses, when they saw you in your braw blue uniform faced wi' red, and your scarlet waistcoat trimmed wi' gold lace. Aweel, aweel, 'tis nae so lang syne; and I maun say you have keepit your gude luks yet, though the sombre suit you are wearing the noo disna, to my mind, become you so weel as t'other.'

The laird was right; for the young writer was possessed of a tall and finely made figure, and had handsome and regular features.

Mr. Colquhoun Grant did not pride himself on his good looks, handsome as he was; but he did pride himself on the purity and facility with which he spoke English—though, in truth, he spoke in the broadest Lowland Scotch dialect. So great was his self-delusion in this respect, that it is told of him that once, in after-life, he had occasion to be in London, as agent in an appeal

before the House of Lords, when, having to take the duty of the clerk, he commenced reading a paper in his best style, and while satisfied that he was making an impression on the House by his elocution and the correctness of his pronunciation, he was unpleasantly astonished by the Lord Chancellor exclaiming, 'Mr. Col-co-hon, I will thank you to give that paper back to the clerk, as I do not understand Gaelic.'

'I say, gentlemen, when you have come to an end of your compliments,' interposed Mr. Hog, as the two Jacobites paused for a minute in their flow of talk, 'I would suggest that you should proceed to business. Kincraigie wants to consult you, Mr. Grant, on a point which is causing him deep anxiety.'

'Indeed,' said Mr. Grant, with an air of sympathy, 'I'm muckle concerned to hear that my freen is in any sort o' trouble; but,' he added, addressing the laird, 'gin I can aid ye, ye may command my puir services.'

‘I ken’d sae much,’ replied the laird fervently, grasping Mr. Grant’s hand as he spoke; ‘’twas a happy thocht o’ Mr. Hog’s to bring us thegither. Ye will do my business, I’ll warrant, and mayhap you’ll throw in your lot wi’ mine. Hech, sirs, ’twould be a glorious sicht! twa martyrs deeing at once on the Castle Hill.’

It was Colquhoun Grant’s turn now to look surprised, whilst Mr. Hog, no longer under the influence of fear, chuckled softly.

‘I’ll haud my tongue no longer,’ continued the laird, raising his voice to a higher pitch; ‘I’ll mak’ an end o’ a fause complaisance and cringing to the German usurper they ca’ king, and the bluidthirsty curs they ca’ ministers, wha do his bidding, and a’ the hungry German mercenaries wha devour our substance, like their ain muckle grey rottens* they hae brought ower to this country wi’ them.’

‘Dinna speak sae loud,’ exclaimed Grant, with an air of some concern; ‘ye may be heard.’

* Rats.

‘And what ‘then?’ thundered the laird.
‘I wad be heard. I want a’ Edinbro to hear me. I wad like to proclaim frae the house-tops the monstrous wickedness o’ the German Elector.’

‘Aweel, aweel, sir, I beg ye winna do’t in my chambers,’ said Mr. Grant hastily; ‘and gin ye want to mak’ peace wi’ the Government, or to get restitution o’ ony right ye hae been deprived of, then I’ll advise you to say nae mair ‘gain our present rulers, except in private wi’ freends.’

‘I want nae favour,’ replied the laird haughtily; ‘I only want justice, simple unmistakable justice. And gin ye are the freend I took you to be, Mr. Colquhoun Grant, you’ll help me to obtain it.’

‘In short, to keep you no longer in the dark,’ interposed Mr. Hog, with a grave air, ‘you must manage to get our friend incarcerated again in the Tolbooth, brought up before the High Court of Justiciary, and tried for high treason, sentenced, and in due course, hung, drawn, and quartered.’

‘Tut, tut, Mr. Hog! ye are amusing

yersel' at my expense, and jesting,' exclaimed the amazed writer.

'I say, Mr. Colquhoun Grant, do you suppose I would jest on such a subject, sir?' replied Hog, with the same grave composure with which he had first spoken, but looking meaningly at the lawyer, who was not ignorant of the state of Kin-craigie's mind.

'We are auld freends, auld brothers in arms, Mr. Colquhoun Grant,' said the laird, with an air of great pathos; 'do me this service—only get me lodged i' the Tolbooth, and 'twill be ane step towards the desired object. I shame to think I sud hae lived sae mony years in disgraceful concealment, when a' the time my quarters might hae been honourably disposed ower the city gates.'

'Was ever the like o' this heard before!' muttered Grant, who, beginning now to comprehend the fresh hallucination which had taken possession of the daft laird, hurriedly asked himself what excuse he should frame for not carrying out his friend's behests.

‘ Like mysel’, ye hae focht for our lawfu’ Prince, and escaped a’ the dangers o’ the battle-field; but were ye never since smitten, Mr. Colquhoun Grant, wi’ the desire to achieve sae glorious and honourable an end as that o’ laying doon your life on the gibbet for him?’ inquired the laird, casting a searching glance on the Writer to the Signet.

‘What guid wad that do him noo?’ hastily exclaimed the latter, and then he continued in an assumed pathetic tone, ‘ Ah, Kincraigie, I hae a family, twa puir wee bairnies dependent on me; but gin I were as free as you are——’

Grant stopped here, and nodded his head significantly, both his manner and words implying that were he unshackled by such endearing ties as he had alluded to, he would be quite as eager for the honour of a public execution as his friend; and the laird, not perceiving the merry twinkle in the writer’s keen black eyes as he glanced at Mr. Hog, abruptly walked to him, and

seizing his hand, shook it warmly in a transport of enthusiasm.

‘I ken’d ye to be a loyal subject o’ King James, but you maun live for your poor bairns, my dear sir, and leave the honour o’ being executed to a lonely man like mysel’, who has neither wife nor bairn ; but noo anent my affair. Hoo soon can ye get me clappit i’ the Tolbooth ?’

‘Of coorse, ye wad like to arrange your affairs first,’ suggested the writer. ‘Ye maun tak’ a little time for that.’

‘I want nae time,’ replied the laird emphatically ; ‘dinna fash me wi’ hinting at delay. The next week—to-morrow—to-day—ay, this verra hour even, I wad be ready, an’ you could obtain the necessary warrant.’

‘Ah, there it is,’ said the writer, in a tone of affected regret. ‘Ye see, Kinncraigie, the law is an unco slow body to set in motion at a’ times ; and noo, unluckily, the summer sessions are over, so that we maun wait till the 12th o’ November before we could tak’ a step.’

‘Mair than three months!’ cried out the laird, in tones of wrath and sorrow.

‘I say three months exactly, for to-day is the 12th of August,’ remarked Mr. Hog. ‘But could you really do nothing before then, Mr. Colquhoun Grant?’ he added, looking sily at the writer, the drift of whose observations on the slowness of the law he perfectly well understood to be only a subterfuge, whereby to free himself from the importunity of the laird.

‘Naething whatever,’ replied Mr. Grant, with great emphasis.

Mischievously bent, however, on not letting the lawyer escape so easily from helping him to promote the laird’s wish to be hung, drawn, and quartered, Mr. Hog, with provoking perseverance, said in a grave tone :


‘I am very sorry to hear you say so, sir. But I say, Mr. Colquhoun Grant, it strikes me that in this case of Kincraigie’s there is a very abstruse and difficult legal question. Would it not be advisable to take the opinion of some advocate upon

it? There is Mr. McQueen; what say you to him, sir? I hear a great deal of him; and though he is only a young man, he has a good practice, and it is increasing rapidly.'

Mr. Grant could scarcely repress a smile, though he was a little nettled at the persistency with which Mr. Hog adhered to his evident intention of making him act a part in the laird's craze.

'What! Robie McQueen, that Whig deevil! Nae, nae, he winna do,' exclaimed the laird wrathfully.

'Mr. McQueen,' observed the writer, taking no notice of the laird's exclamation, 'is a man of great intellectual power, and he has had guid opportunities of showing it since he was appointed counsel for the Crown in some causes respecting the estates forfeited in '45. He kens weel hoo the processes o' the Supreme Court sud be managed, for before he was made an advocate he was apprenticed to Mr. Gouldie, a very eminent writer. He has high moral courage, and is very firm, and



has rather a hasty temper, and is nae always verra courteous in his manners.'

'He looks as if he could be very severe,' observed Mr. Hog.

The laird, who had been listening silently, though in a state of intense excitement, as the nervous twitches about his mouth evidenced, exclaimed abruptly :

'The Whig deevil, gin he's helpit the German Elector to claw the estates o' loyal Jacobite gentlemen, he's the verra man for me! He'll gar me be clapp't in the Tolbooth. We maun gang to him at ance, and get him to hae me brought afore the Lord Justice Clerk.'

'I say, Mr. Colquhoun Grant,' interposed Mr. Hog, with a waggish glance at the writer, 'I think we had better get you to arrange with Mr. McQueen for a consultation either at Fortune's tavern, or at John Dowie's in Libberton's Wynd. Perhaps it will be best at Honest John's, and we shall get a glass of his prime ale and some Nor' Loch trouts and Welsh rabbits.'

'Mr. McQueen is unco brilliant at con-

sultations,' remarked Mr. Grant, returning Mr. Hog's waggish glance, but with a somewhat mischievous twinkle in his eyes, 'and dootless we shall see him Lord Justice Clerk o' Scotland gin we leeve lang enough ; but Kincraigie and you might nae be able to understand him, he speaks sic broad Scotch : he canna pronounce the English tongue sae pure as you and me, Mr. Hog.'

The laird was about to dissent emphatically from this doubt as to his understanding Mr. McQueen, when Mr. Grant cut the matter short by saying :

' But most unfortunately for our freend Kincraigie's case, Mr. McQueen left the toon last week. I believe he is gone into Lanarkshire to his father's hoose at Braxfield, and he'll nae be back here till November.'

'The deevil !' exclaimed Kincraigie.

'Are you quite sure that nothing can be done before then ?' asked Mr. Hog, now beginning to fear that the management of the laird's case would be left to him.

‘Quite certain,’ replied Mr. Grant ; ‘and when we have made a beginning with Kincaigie’s case, ’twill be months, and perhaps even years, afore we can mak’ an end o’t. I tell ye, gentlemen, the law is an unco slow-moving animal.’

‘The deil tak’ you and your law!’ shouted the laird, now in high dudgeon. ‘Wad ye hae me keepit oot o’ my rights a’ that time?’

‘My dear freend,’ replied Mr. Grant, very serenely smiling, ‘gin the Pope himsel’ wanted to be hung, drawn, and quartered, we could nae get it dune for him ony quicker. It maun a’ be dune according to law.’

‘Aweel, aweel, I wish you guid-day, Mr. Colquhoun Grant,’ replied the laird, with an air of stolid determination. ‘I see that either ye canna or ye winna help me ; but I tell ye I will hae my rights : I will lay down my life for my lawfu’ King, as ither brave gentlemen hae done. I’ll accomplish my purpose, and I hope that for many a lang year the skull o’ Kin-

craigie, blackening ower the gate o' the
auld Tolbooth, will bear testimony to future
generations o' the ardour and depth o' his
attachment to his rightful sovereign, King
James, wham may God bless !



CHAPTER XIV.

FISHING FOR PODLEYS.*

TONY WITHAM had gone, as his mother had informed Mr. Hog, to try his new fishing-rod at Leith, in company with Lady Archer's two sons—Tom, a lad of about twelve years of age; and Billy, a smart urchin of nine, or a little more.

And here behold the heir and representative of the Withams of Birkswick seated, as it would seem, in a somewhat perilous position, on the edge of one of a flight of

* A little fish, averaging about six or eight inches in length, very abundant in the Firth of Forth, and affording much sport to juvenile anglers. It is said to be the young of the coal-fish.

steps under the pier of Leith, the incoming tide running swift beneath him, and around him a knot of lads, schoolfellows of the Archers, all jostling against each other, galloping up and down the steps, or making hazardous jumps on to the baulks of timber jutting out under the pier.

Tony had never been at the sea-side before, and everything delighted him at Leith. All was charm and novelty to him ; and a pleasant picture the child himself made, seated close by the rude and blackened timbers, and watching with eager delight the incoming waves beating the shore on the opposite side of the harbour. So intent was he gazing at these sea billows, and laughing, in childish mirth, at the salt spray that now and then flew up into his face, that he had become even insensible to the attractions of his new rod, and sat idle, quite regardless of his fishing-float dancing here and there in the water, whilst his companions were catching podleys as fast as they cast in their lines. All was life and bustle and activity in the busy

scene in which the little country-bred lad now found himself.

On the broad quay, wharfed up with stone and fenced with oaken piles, every description of merchandise was to be seen in transit to or from the ships; and the long pier, at the mouth of the river Water of Leith, which formed the harbour, running out far beyond the land, was thronged with people enjoying the fresh sea breeze.

About half-way down the pier, where the woodwork ceased and the interlacing timbers were replaced by stones, stained at their base a greenish hue by the action of the water, Tony saw a lad of his own age balancing himself fearlessly on the end of a projecting beam, whilst he shouted questions and answers to a sailor leaning over the side of the vessel, moored at a short distance off.

‘Who is that boy?’ asked Tony, turning to Tom Archer; ‘do you know him?’

‘Yes—Charlie Macdonald; he is a very nice fellow; he can fish like anything, and

swim too ; you should see him swim—why, he can swim like a fish !’

‘Macdonald ! why, I believe his father keeps a whisky-shop in Inverness,’ said Master Hog, the eldest son of Mr. Hog of Newliston, a lad about eleven years of age, and who chanced to be at Leith that afternoon, in the company of those special objects of his father’s dislike the Archers.

‘What if he does keep a whisky-shop ?’ replied the English baronet’s son, detecting the covert sneer conveyed in young Hog’s words. ‘Macdonald is worth half a dozen of some fellows I know’—and here the speaker glanced contemptuously at the son and heir of Newliston—‘who haven’t as much spunk in the whole of their bodies as he has got in his little finger. Pretty fellows ! who curl their hair, and scent their pocket-handkerchiefs, and lisp and talk like a miss.’

To add force to his taunts, Tom Archer imitated so exactly the manner and airs and gestures of Master James Hog, who affected to be a great fop, and was very

conceited as to his personal appearance, as to cause the other boys to shout with laughter. This so much provoked young Hog, that, boiling over with rage, he aimed a blow at Archer.

The latter, though both taller and stronger than his assailant, to keep up the fun, pretended to be alarmed, and ducking down his head behind Tony, cried out :

‘Oh, please don’t hit me ! I’m so frightened ; I’ll never displease you any more. *Porce*, o, hog ! *Porce*, o, hog, as we say at the High School.’

This last insult was so keenly felt, that young Hog, forgetful of any disparity in point of strength, aimed a blow with all his might at his tormentor ; but the fun and laughter of the frolicsome boys was suddenly changed into terror and dismay, for in jerking aside to avoid the hit, Tom Archer’s foot slipped, and he struck against Tony Witham, who was instantly pushed forwards, and fell head foremost into the sea.

The cries of the boys were re-echoed by

the shouts of several men on different vessels close at hand, who had witnessed the accident, each one calling out to the other to lower the boats ; but as is very generally the case when a sudden catastrophe has occurred, no one seemed to know what to do. For a moment, the poor boy's head was seen borne up by the waves, and then again the white face disappeared ; but the child's shriek and pitiful cry for help was instantly drowned in the huzzas of the people, for Charlie Macdonald had waited but a moment to see where the drowning boy would reappear, and then plunged boldly in, and aided by the strong in-running tide, struck out with a vigour that excited the applause of all who beheld him, and diving down, reappeared, almost as soon as he had dived, with poor Tony, whom he brought safely to the next flight of steps down from the pier. Many arms were extended to take the dripping, insensible form of the little English lad from the firm grasp of his deliverer, who, so soon as he had seen the

first signs of returning consciousness in the apparently inanimate body he had rescued from the sea, turned on his heel, and eager to avoid thanks, distasteful to one of his bashful nature, slipped away unobserved through the crowd, in the general excitement, and repaired to a house on the quay where he was known, and simply saying that he had been in the water, he dried his clothes and went home.

To return to Tony Witham, almost as soon as his rescuer had vanished in the crowd, the half-drowned boy was himself borne away to the Ship Inn, where all the usual remedies and restoratives were skilfully applied by the kind and motherly landlady. The child soon opened his large grey eyes, and gazed wonderingly about him at the strange room, with its leaded casements and its quaint old-fashioned appointments, and then upon the strange faces grouped about him. The familiar countenance of Tom Archer, with its wistful, half-scared look, seemed to recall Tony entirely to himself ; and with a vigour that

surprised all present, he sat up on the large old settle and cried out :

‘Where’s my new fishing-rod, and my podleys ? I caught ever so many.’

This demand caused some laughter amongst those in the room, who were, however, gratified to find that the lad was so far recovered, and he, having been satisfied as to the safety of his rod and his podleys, willingly got into the coach provided for him and was driven to James’s Court.

Too truly did Mrs. Witham think that Mr. Hog’s predictions had been verified when her son was brought home in a hackney-coach, his clothes still saturated with water, and his usually ruddy cheeks pale from the effects of fear and his sudden immersion.

From the Archers she learned all that had occurred ; but when the first great excitement of a mother’s joy for the safety of her son was over, and she came to inquire after the brave lad who had rescued her darling from a watery grave, no one

appeared able to give her any satisfaction. Tom Archer said, indeed, that he thought—nay, he was sure—it must have been a boy called Charlie Macdonald; but James Hog averred that it was a young sailor lad who had sprung out of a boat. In making this assertion James Hog did not wilfully deprive Charlie Macdonald of the credit due to him, for there was a boat moored close to the spot where the latter was standing, and young Hog really thought that the boy who had swum to Tony's aid had sprung out of this boat. The fact was, that at the first alarm all eyes had been fixed on little Tony Witham, and it was only the splash of Charlie Macdonald's sudden plunge in the water that caused the bystanders to look in his direction.

Mrs. Witham expressed great sorrow at having thus to remain in ignorance as to who had been her son's deliverer, and she began to inquire particularly of Tom Archer concerning the Charles Macdonald he had spoken of.

‘Why, ma’am, he goes to the High School, and he is in my class ; but then, you see, there are near two hundred in it, so there’s only a few of us that know each other.’

‘Besides, Macdonald is not a gentleman’s son ; he is only a poor boy,’ said James Hog, edging his way into the conversation. ‘His grandfather or father keeps just a little inn at Inverness ; one of our boys told us so.’

‘Oh, lud ! how very strange !’ said Mrs. Witham, a little surprised. ‘I vow and protest I thought there would have been none but young gentlemen at the High School.’

‘Oh, there’s all sorts,’ replied young Hog. ‘I can tell you, ma’am, a boy sits next me in the class whose father keeps a little dirty whisky-shop in the Cowgate ; and doesn’t he smell of whisky of a morning ! it makes me quite sick.’

‘Macdonald is not a poor boy at all,’ said Tom Archer stoutly. ‘I have heard some of the boys say that he always has

plenty of pocket-money, and that he is very generous with it too ; not like some miserly fellows, who, when you borrow a penny of 'em, make you pay back three-halfpence.'

Tom Archer looked so significantly at James Hog that the choler of the latter began to rise again ; and there would have been rough words between them had not Mrs. Witham at that moment summoned the disputants to a very sumptuous tea, in doing justice to which Master Hog's resentment subsided.



CHAPTER XV.

THE PREACHING FRIARS VENNEL.

BLACKFRIARS WYND, or the Preaching Friars Vennel, at the time of which we write, had not lost that fine antique picturesqueness which has disappeared in the present century, and has given place to rude and tasteless modern erections, or to ruinous desolation.

On a Sunday morning, early in September, four children, and a woman somewhat advanced in years, were making their way up the wynd ; these little ones being Tony Witham and his three sisters, and their old nurse Mrs. Bridget Pippet, on their way to church.

Since the disastrous year 1745 the

Catholic religion had sunk to its lowest point, and been almost extinguished by the cruel operation of the penal laws, which, after that last fatal rising in favour of the exiled Royal family, had been more rigidly enforced, if it were possible, than they had formerly been. Throughout the length and breadth of Scotland, from north to south, from east to west, the faithful adherents to the old creed of their ancestors possessed not a single church; and mass, shorn of all its stately and imposing ceremonies, was said stealthily only every now and then, in a back room or garret, in some obscure street or locality, before a small group of earnest worshippers.

Thus it was that at the date of our tale, in the Scottish metropolis itself, there was no stately Gothic pile in which the followers of the old faith could kneel before the altar of the Most High; yet the antique stone tenement, with its picturesque projecting timber *façade* in the old close, once the approach to the monastery of the Dominicans, or Black Friars,

as they were popularly called, had been chosen by the Edinburgh Catholics as a place of worship—not infelicitously, for memories of the past still clung about the spot then, and later on, too, known as the Preaching Friars Vennel.

Very still and almost solitary was the appearance of this quaint Blackfriars Wynd as the four children tripped along under the shadow of the old houses, towering up to so great a height, with story jutting out over story, so far forward, that only a strip of the clear blue sky was visible overhead, and only the centre of the wynd caught a ray of sunlight, streaming in one long narrow brilliant line of light, its radiance seeming the more vivid from contrast with the depth of shadow on either side of it.

Yet this ancient wynd, though now in its downward course, had for centuries past been one of the most aristocratic districts of the Scottish capital. Here the proudest nobles of the kingdom had been wont to yield place to the dignitaries

of the Church ; but it had witnessed stranger, less peaceful, and more stirring scenes than the passing up and down it of Church dignitaries and haughty nobles.

Now the rush and the shouts and war-cries of armed men, as the victorious followers of the Earl of Angus, after assaulting the palace of the Archbishop of Glasgow at the foot of the wynd, sped to the church of the Black Friars, there to wreak their vengeance on his person ; and now the clash of steel, as the retainers of the Earl of Bothwell and those of Sir William Stewart fought fiercely, hand to hand, in the narrow close, till Sir William was slain by the sword of his rival. Nor was that the last scene of violence and blood wrought out under the shadow of those grim old stone and timber tenements ; for at a later date, the Bishop of Orkney, while stepping into the carriage of the Archbishop of St. Andrews, received in his body, from the pistol of the fanatic Mitchel, the bullet intended for the Archbishop.

The little Withams, however, knew nothing of all these dark deeds, or of the fierce strife that had raged in days gone by in this quiet and peaceful wynd, whose declining fortunes had, as we have said, already set in ; they only thought it very narrow, and very dark and gloomy, used as they were to the broad expanse of beautiful landscape surrounding their Westmoreland home.

Was Mrs. Witham ill, that her three children were sent alone with an old nurse to church ? No, she was in good health ; but, as we have before observed, her paternal family, the Sissons, belonged to the Nonjurant sect in the Church of England, and she herself worshipped in the Episcopalian Chapel of St. Paul, in Carrubber's Close, which had been the obscure retreat of the Scottish Jacobite gentry since the Revolution. But the widow of the late Squire Tony Witham, being a conscientious little lady, respected the wishes of her dead husband as regarded the religious education of his

children, and was ever exact to see that their old Catholic nurse took them to a chapel of their own faith on every day of obligation.

Nurse Pippet was getting old and rheumatic in her joints now, so Tony and the girls piloted her up the six flights of steep, narrow, turnpike stairs which led to the chapel at the top of the high tenement. They halted in their progress at a door on the fifth flight, and stood before it to read the name of the resident priest, which was painted on it in simple fashion ; a name, however, destined to give place, a few years hence, to one worthy of note—that of Mr. George Hay, once a youthful surgeon in the army of Prince Charlie ; later on, the well-known Bishop Hay, who, by his piety, zeal, and energy, raised the Catholic Church in Scotland from its then prostrate state.

The little Withams were not disappointed at the interior appearance of the humble chapel, for unadorned and undecorated as it was, they had never, in

truth, seen any place of worship grander than their own little oratory at Birkswick ; but simple as was this obscure chapel of the Catholics of Edinburgh, even when furnished with the symbols of the Roman ritual, aided by the costly decorated vestments of the priest who officiated at the altar, nobles and men of ancient lineage were wont to worship there ; and on that very Sunday morning, there knelt near the young Withams a lady of high rank, in deep mourning—the widowed lady of Simon, Lord Lovat, the ‘last of the martyrs,’ who had laid down his life for the royal and exiled House of Stuart.

Mass had already commenced when Mrs. Pippet and her small charge entered the chapel, and the latter at once took the places assigned to them, and devoutly knelt down—all save Tony, who caused sundry persons to cast glances of rebuke at him, as he was heard to utter, half aloud, an expression of mingled joy and surprise.

The three girls were placed betwixt the

nurse and their brother, so that Mrs. Pippet could only shake her head at the boy, and marvel what could be the cause of his distraction. Tony, however, did not perceive her sign of disapproval, for he was staring, with his big grey eyes open to their fullest extent, at the young clerk or acolyte in attendance on the officiating priest.

He was a boy about Tony's own age, a very handsome boy, with a fine open brow, and bright locks that shone as if tinged with gold, as a stray sunbeam fell upon his fair head.

The mystery of Tony's distraction was not explained till after the service was over, when he communicated to nurse, in a hurried whisper, that the acolyte was the boy who had saved him from drowning at Leith.

Yes, although meeting again so unexpectedly, and seeing him attired, one might almost say disguised, in the white surplice and scarlet cassock of an acolyte, Tony, to his great amazement, had in-

stantly recognised the boy, whom he had seen so fearlessly balancing himself on the end of a projecting beam of the pier at Leith, and whose name, Tom Archer had told him, was Charlie Macdonald.

Upon learning who the young acolyte was, Mrs. Pippet consented with alacrity to remain in the chapel till he should leave; and upon seeing him come out of the sacristy disrobed, the nurse and her young party followed him to the outside of the chapel door.

Very great was the surprise of Charlie Macdonald when Tony, whom he did not in the least recollect—for he had seen him but for a few minutes, and under such different circumstances—poured out a string of bashful and incoherent thanks, whilst the three little girls looked admiringly up at him, and Nurse Pippet fairly hugged him, in the exuberance of her gratitude, and gave him a very loud and fervent kiss; but we are bound to say that the ungallant young rogue quite disapproved of this part of the performance—nay, he

even furtively wiped his lips with the cuff of his little coat when nurse had turned her back.

When relating what had happened, that evening, to his new and very kind friend, the Laird of Kincraigie, Charlie had said, in alluding to this little episode, 'And you see, sir, I don't like being kissed.' Ah, Charlie Macdonald ! Charlie Macdonald ! had it been demure little Miss Winifred's rosy lips that had pressed yours on the turnpike stair, you would not have told the laird that you did not like being kissed. As it was, Winifred simply stole her small hand into Charlie's and said, in a little palpitating voice, 'I love you so much for saving Tony ;' and then, as if ashamed of her boldness, slipped away to Nurse Pippet's side.

Of course all the children, with one voice, insisted that Charlie Macdonald should come, there and then, and see their mamma, and so the happy little procession trudged off, the two boys, arm linked in arm, in front, the girls treading close on

their heels, and nurse bringing up the rear, for her rheumatic jog-trot pace could not keep up with the eager, hurried walk of the little ones, all anxiety, as they were, to communicate their news to their mother.

Charlie was almost dragged into the presence of Mrs. Witham, whose ears were saluted by a long string of broken and nearly unintelligible exclamations, some of them, indeed, very ungrammatical: 'This is him, mamma—the boy that jumped into the water to save Tony.' 'And he is a Catholic—aren't you?' 'And we saw him at our chapel.' 'And Tony called out quite loud when he saw him at the altar.' 'Wasn't that naughty!' 'And oh, mamma, isn't it a good thing that we have found him?'

Mrs. Witham took Charlie's hand in her own, and spoke to him very tenderly and gratefully, from the depth of her mother's heart, and said how glad she would be often to see him, and then asked him where he lived.

‘ I live, ma’am, with my cousin, Mrs. Gillespie, on the Castle Hill.’

‘ Vastly odd, I declare ! I know a gentleman who lives there, child—Mr. Robertson, and a mighty pleasant and polite gentleman he is.’

‘ Kincraigie, you mean, ma’am,’ replied the lad, smiling involuntarily at the English lady’s mistake in calling the laird Mr. Robertson. ‘ Oh, he is very kind, and he is very good to me. I have been with him a great deal ; but now that the holidays are over, I do not see him so much.’

‘ And do you go to the High School ?’

‘ Yes, ma’am, and I am in the second class.’

Here was fresh cause for congratulation, for Tony was also in the second class, although amongst so great numbers as were in the different classes the two boys had not hitherto known each other, even by sight ; henceforward, however, they would be more together.

‘ But I have never asked you your name

yet. Are you the Charlie Macdonald I have heard speak of, my dear child? And your parents, do they live in Scotland? You speak English as though you had been brought up in England.'

'My name is Charlie Macdonald, ma'am, and my real home is in Inverness. I have no parents; my mother died when I was a baby, and my father—I just remember him, only as though I had seen him in a dream—he was killed at the battle of Culloden.'

The boy's lip quivered as he uttered the last few words, and a shadow rested on his bright expressive face, like a passing cloud obscuring, for a while, the radiance of a sunlit sky. Mrs. Witham felt sorry that she had touched a chord which had awakened such painful memories in the heart of the child, and felt just a little feeling of regret, too, that the saviour of her boy, this handsome, intelligent-looking lad, should be really only the son, or grandson rather, of an innkeeper. There might, however, be some reason for this

little feeling of regret on the part of Mrs. Witham ; for she was picturing to herself Charlie's grandfather as another such man as mine host of the Mitre Inn at Appleby, with rubicund nose, and a great rotundity of body, and a certain vulgarity of speech and manner inseparable from his calling, unaware, as she was, of the fact that had she travelled into the Highlands, she would have learnt that inns, or changes as they were there sometimes called, were not unfrequently kept by persons even nearly related to the chief of the district, who would have looked with disdain on the little lady's own genealogy, fair as it may have been.

As for Tony, no shadow of regret mingled with his joy at meeting with the little friend who had rescued him in that dreadful moment, when the waters had closed over his head, in the harbour at Leith. A new and strong affection had sprung up in his heart, and the same might be said of Charlie Macdonald. The friendship commenced on that day only

became cemented more firmly as years passed on; time, absence, and adverse influences failed to weaken it; it grew with their growth, and strengthened with their strength, and boyish affection deepened, in the future, into the everlasting and undying friendship which marked their ripper years.

END OF VOL. I.





